THE ARCHITECTURE OF COMMUNITY
LÉON KRIER

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THE ARCHITECTURE OF COMMUNITY

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LÉON KRIER

EDITED BY

DHIRU A. THADANI
+
PETER J. HETZEL

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TO

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE PRINCE OF WALES

FOUNDER OF POUNDBURY

IN GRATITUDE FOR

UNDAUNTED COURAGE.

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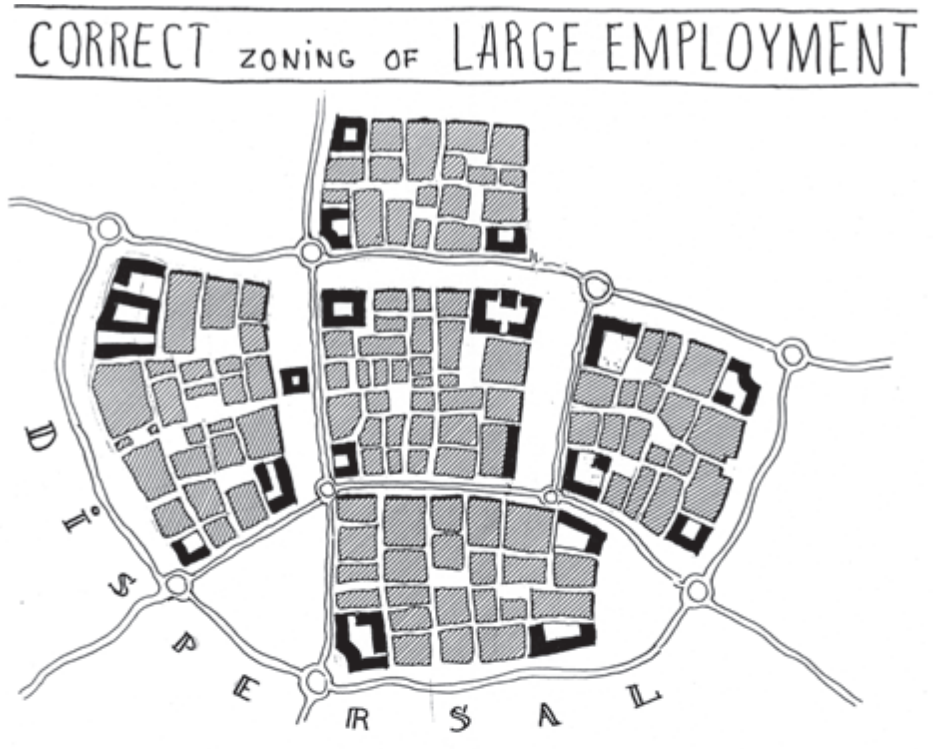
In 2000, Dhiru Thadani observed that publications of my work were scarce and very difficult to find. With encouragement from Andrés Duany, Mr. Thadani set forth to assemble, edit, and make available a handy publication of my architectural and planning ideas and how they are applied in my built work. I am indebted to Dhiru Thadani and Peter Hetzel for turning our work sessions into occasions of sheer delight.

An elaboration and expansion of this work was started in 2001 as a response to the lack of practical information for planning the post-fossil fuel settlement patterns and buildings. This book may serve as a guide to the financial, real estate, planning, and design professions, who have the power to dispel the myth of modernism and technocratic solutions – and offer time-tested sustainable alternatives to suburbia.

The project was made possible through generous support from the Center for Applied Transect Studies (CATS), Miami, Florida, and the Knight Program in Community Building at the University of Miami's School of Architecture, which promote the knowledge, understanding, and application of New Urbanism, the Transect, and the Smart Code.


CORRECT ZONING OF LARGE EMPLOYMENT
DISPERSAL

MISTAKEN ZONING OF LARGE EMPLOYMENT
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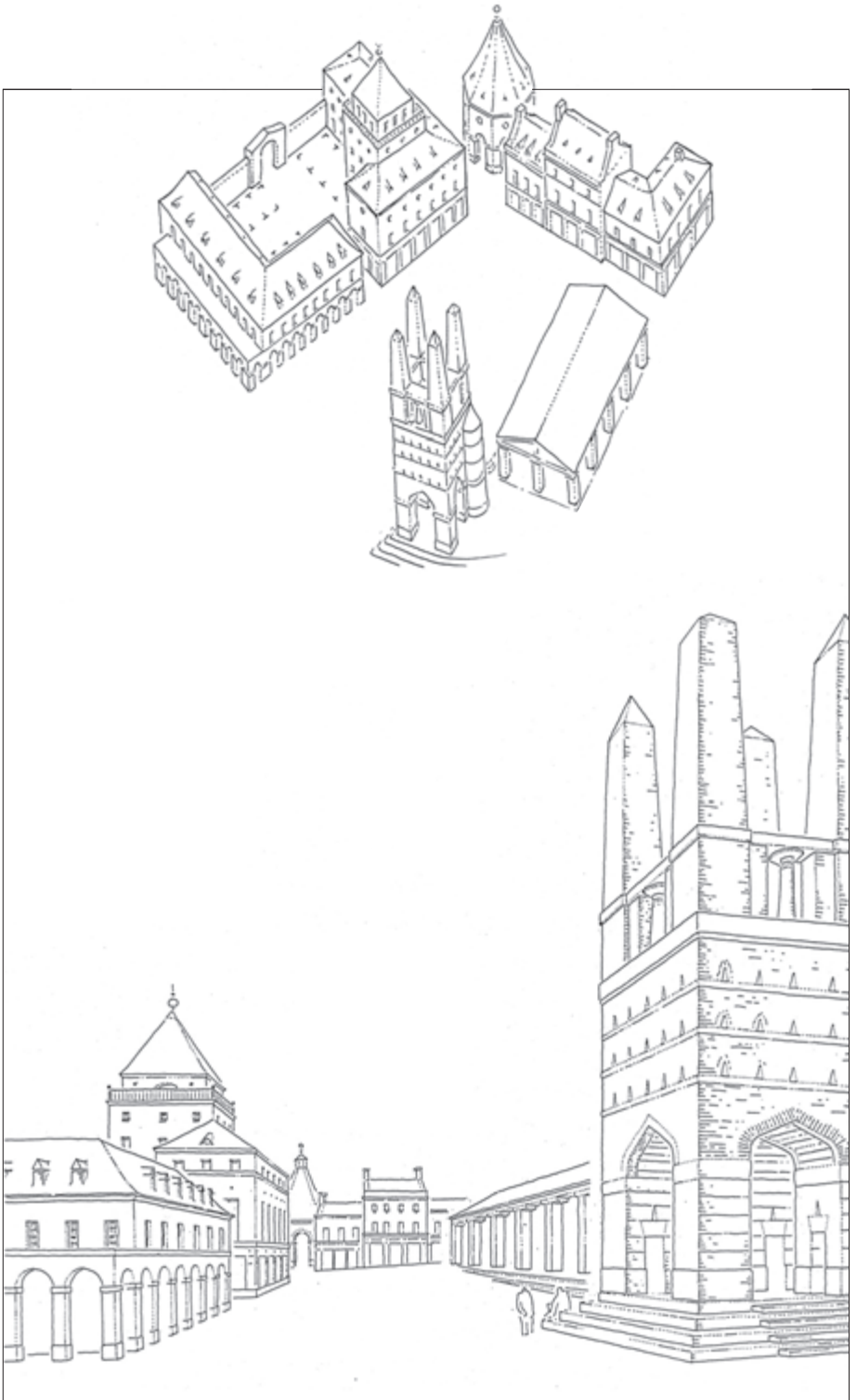

MARKET SQUARE, MIDDLE FARM QUARTER, POUNDBURY, DORSET, L.K. 1991.

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TRANSLATION

VILLA ERRAZURIZ CHILE

L.C. 1930 L.K. 2008

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TOWER BLOCK RENOVATION, ALESSANDRIA, ITALY
ARCHEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, SINTRA, PORTUGAL
THE SEASIDE PRIZE
ROBERT DAVIS LAUDATIO
KRIER HOUSE, SEASIDE, FLORIDA, USA
CITTÁ NUOVA, ALESSANDRIA, ITALY
WINDSOR VILLAGE HALL, VERO BEACH, FLORIDA, USA
BRASSERIE AGAPE, VAL D'EUROPE, FRANCE
THE JORGE M. PEREZ ARCHITECTURE CENTER,
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI, CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA, USA
THE RICHARD H. DRIEHAUS PRIZE FOR CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE
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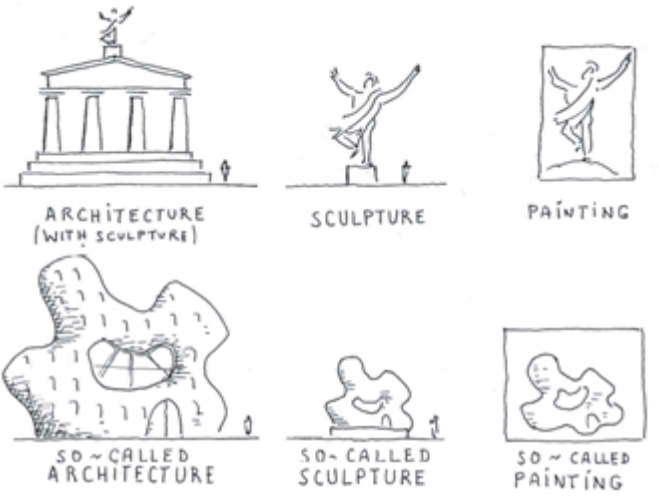
FOREWORD
by
ROBERT A. M. STERN

It is a tremendous privilege to introduce a book that contains work of such importance for each of us concerned with architecture and urbanism. Leon Krier, one of the most influential architects and urbanists of our time, has built comparatively little; but his drawings and his writings have had a profound influence on all those who seek to recapture the successful techniques of place-making that stylistic modernism so deliberately repudiated.

Leon Krier is an unabashed proponent of the humanist culture of Western classicism. But the world Krier constructs is not bounded by a single historical epoch, geography, or cultural circumstance. Its applicability extends to all situations where the human-centered city is valued, and to each architect-urbanist who wishes to carry forward the civilized discourse between buildings and towns that existed before so-called reformers abandoned the lessons of the past and embarked for a brave new world of context-less futurism.

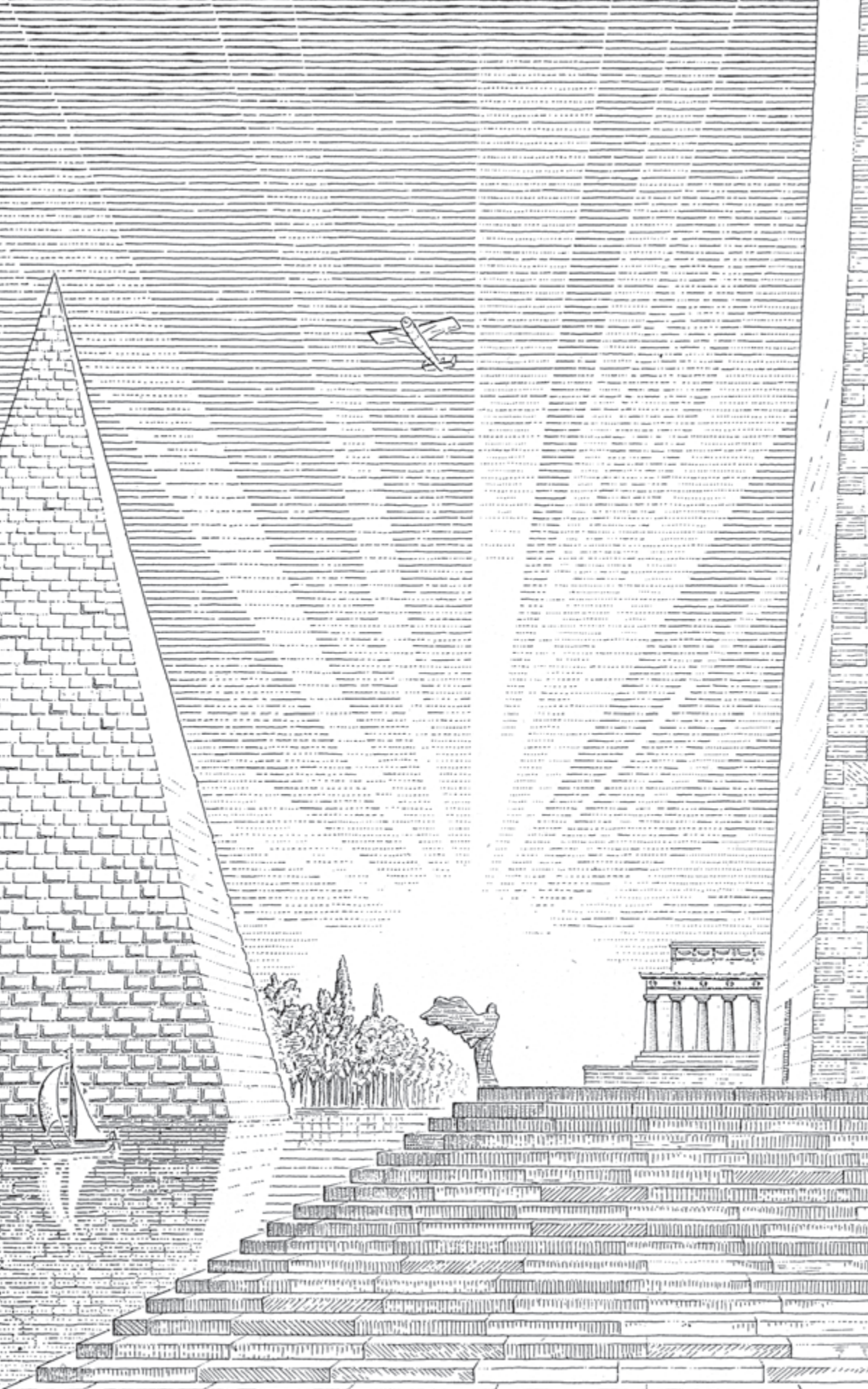
Leon Krier grew up in Luxembourg, an historic city of streets and squares and solid buildings that defined them, a city not yet ripped apart by the convulsions of redevelopment that have since his youth swept away so much which was good but in need of repair in favor of so much which was new but largely shoddy. Krier laments the loss of his home city and by extension of so many other cities "renewed" in the last fifty years. As a result he is often characterized by his critics as a victim of nostalgia for an irretrievable world. Nostalgic he may be; but a victim of nostalgia he is not. Nostalgia is not a weakness. It is a strength. The term "nostalgia" derives from the Greek *nostos*, "return home," and that is what Krier desires – to return home to the more coherent urban order of the past. But his desire to return to order is not to be confused with a desire to roll back the clock.

Although from time to time Krier becomes carried away by his antipathy to stylistic modernism, this is a matter of aesthetic taste and not a reflection of disenchantment with the present. Krier is not a Luddite. Krier is a modern person. But he believes a newly minted architecture and urbanism is not a requirement of modernity; instead, he argues, what is needed is an architecture and urbanism that evolves to meet the challenges and opportunities of the industrialized – and now post-industrialized – world of work and leisure. Krier understands that there is a difference between modernism, which is a singular narrow ideology rooted in disruption, and modernity, which embraces the diversity of conditions that today, as always, define the trajectory of our lives.



Krier's principal antagonist as architect-urbanist is Le Corbusier, who was belligerently utopian, obsessed with a grand masterplan for a future of his own devising. Krier does not call for a utopia. He is above all a realist seeking to reintegrate tradition into modern practice. He opens our eyes to essential relationships between the buildings and public places of the humanist city. What is that city in physical terms? It is a conurbation of streets and squares bounded by continuous blocks of buildings punctuated by occasional icons of visual importance devoted to special institutions of the public weal. This may at first blush seem obvious. But Krier sees the wrong in post-war modernist urbanism. He reminds us that the prevailing discourse of the post-war era, when the planning model of the continuous open field populated by individualistic freestanding buildings has been the advocated and too frequently accepted urban model, is not really urban but in fact fundamentally suburban: remember Le Corbusier's "Vertical Garden City" to describe his early plans for the renovation of Paris?

This book is brilliantly timed. Although a collection of essays written over a lifetime of work and reflection, it stands as a unity, a carefully structured argument. And it pulls no punches. Krier is a polemicist: a passionate and convinced advocate of a point of view. Reading Krier, one has no doubt about where he stands. He does not prevaricate. Understatement is not his preferred locution. More than ever Krier has every right to claim our attention. We need him, as never before. He presents us with the lessons, if we would but take them, that come out of rediscovery. He celebrates the values that are knowable. For all his polemical bluster, Krier begs us to be humble in our work. He insists that we don't have to put our stamp of idiosyncratic innovation on every new building. He recognizes our impulse to improve upon the past, but urges us to counteract it with an obligation to make the new as good as the past, to go back to the basic issues and to solve each problem in terms of what is expected. Krier shows us that the models of history are there for us to study, to imitate. He shows us that the models are often better than what we can think of ourselves.



THE ART OF MAKING PLACES

However beneficial America's achievements in law, science, and technology may have been for human civilization the parallel export of its modern urban planning methods has been less of a blessing. The worldwide adoption of the American forms of development has not only laid waste the cities and landscapes of friends and foes alike, but, meant for American culture itself a historic tragedy.

The places where the majority of American citizens go about their daily occupations are now in shocking contrast to the seductive comforts of their domestic environs. Surely, the anonymity of cloned environs generally, the unreality of the "suburbs," the vulgarity of the "strip," the hostility of business parks and downtowns are not good enough a way for the most powerful people on earth to live. The ensuing tyranny of compulsive commuting is not part of the good "American way of life." Indeed the latter can be vastly improved in terms of efficiency and aesthetics.

Paradoxically the art of building roads, vehicles, and communication systems is far more advanced and widespread than the art of making places.

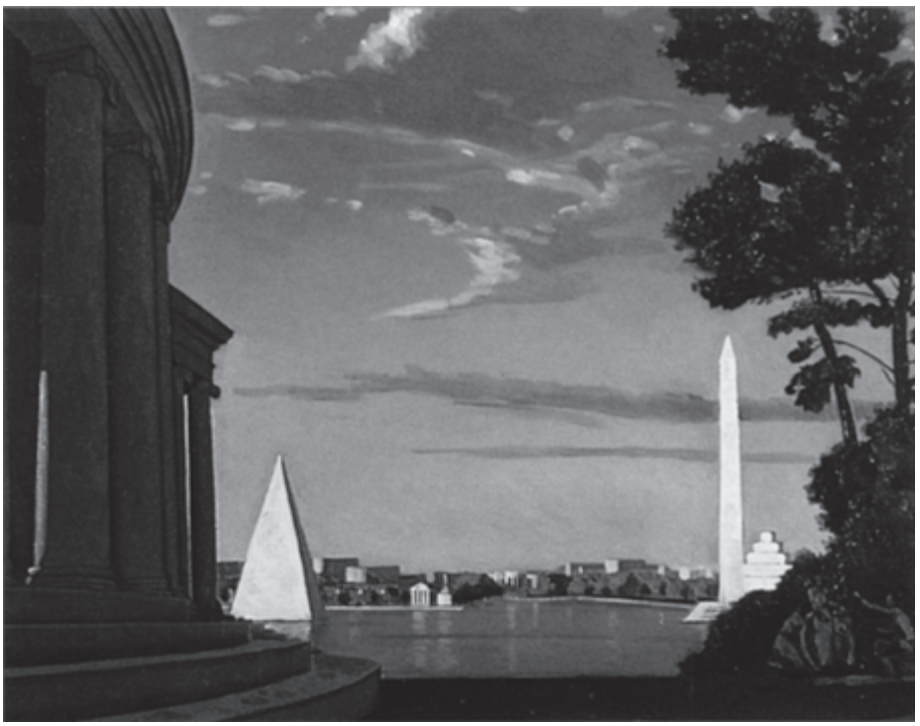
What can be the point of inbetweens when the goals of too many wanderings are not up to the quality of the journey. America builds every week more "usable floor area" than all its historic structures put together, and yet we ask ourselves

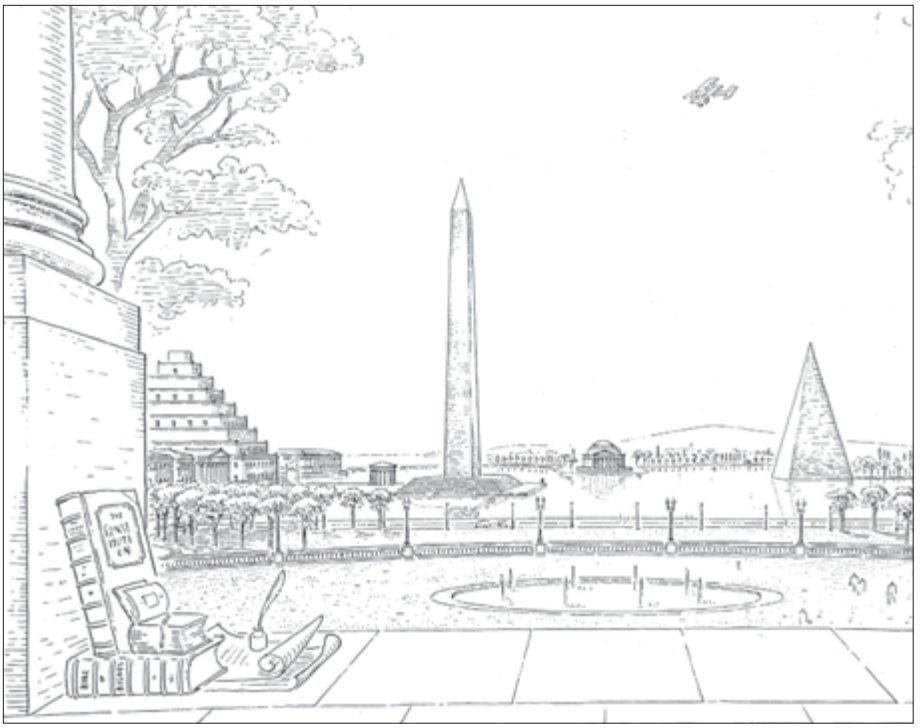
how much of it really improves this country and our lives? How many shopping malls, residential cul-de-sacs, industrial parks, culture complexes, education campuses have you ever visited for their own sake, for no other purpose than enjoying them without a predetermined end in mind?

The majority of American movies feature at some point and in an obsessive way a desperately small number of recurring public addresses and urban backdrops.* This does not so much point to a shortage of public spaces but rather to a deficiency in their value, and ultimately to the unrecognizability, placelessness, and perfect interchangeability of the normal American built environment.

This book outlines a diagnosis and a cure, a critique and a project. The making of places is not an automatic outcome of building activities, but the product of intention and art. It cannot just be an invention of the experts. Such visions lead to certain failures. It needs to respond to the desire of the citizenry as individuals and as communities.

The historic districts of Charleston, of Savannah, of reborn Williamsburg, and the more recent experiments of Seaside, Kentlands, and Celebration the United States, possess tangible examples of how "small town America" wants ideally to live and



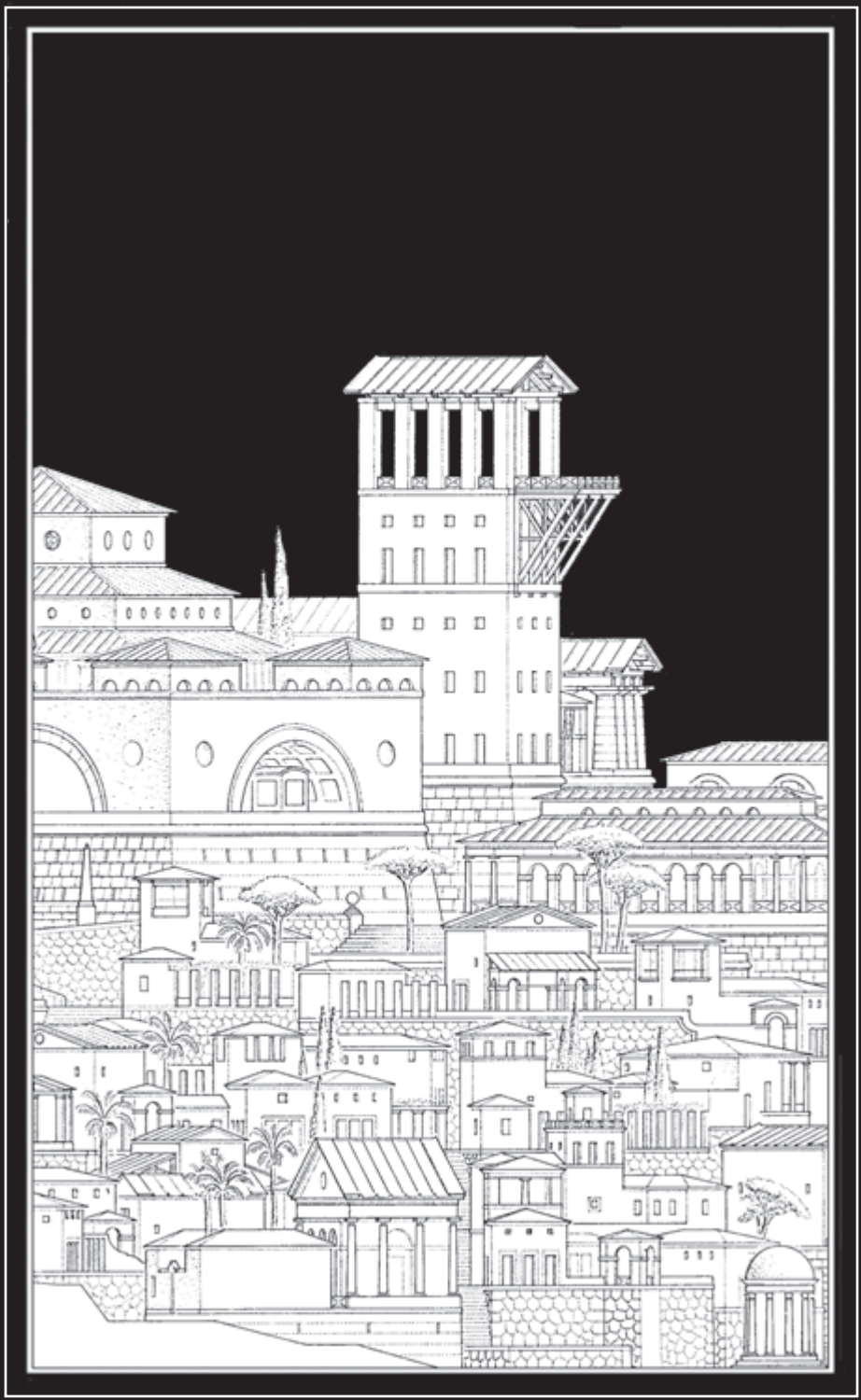


what it wants to look like. The fervor with which these places are revered by their inhabitants and countless visitors has made them not merely nostalgic national shrines of the past but desirable and attainable urban models of the future. No such emblematic models exist so far for the great metropolitan center. Where they did exist, their coherence has been shattered out of recognition by recent "urban improvement programs" and "development."

This book is a collection of text and drawings that outline in an accessible way a general theory for the making of modern cities and villages. These proposals are not of an apodeictic and mathematical nature; their overall purpose is to encourage and illustrate a commonsense approach in urban planning matters. Enough of these ideas have been realized during the last twenty years in the US and Europe to confirm their good sense, their practical and aesthetic efficiency, their general applicability.

* *New Orleans' old town square and streets, New York's Fifth Avenue and Central Park, Washington's Mall and Georgetown, Boston's Beacon Hill, Los Angeles' Rodeo Drive and Sunset Boulevard, San Francisco's Russian Hill and Golden Gate Bridge, Miami's Beach, Chicago's Michigan Avenue, etc.*

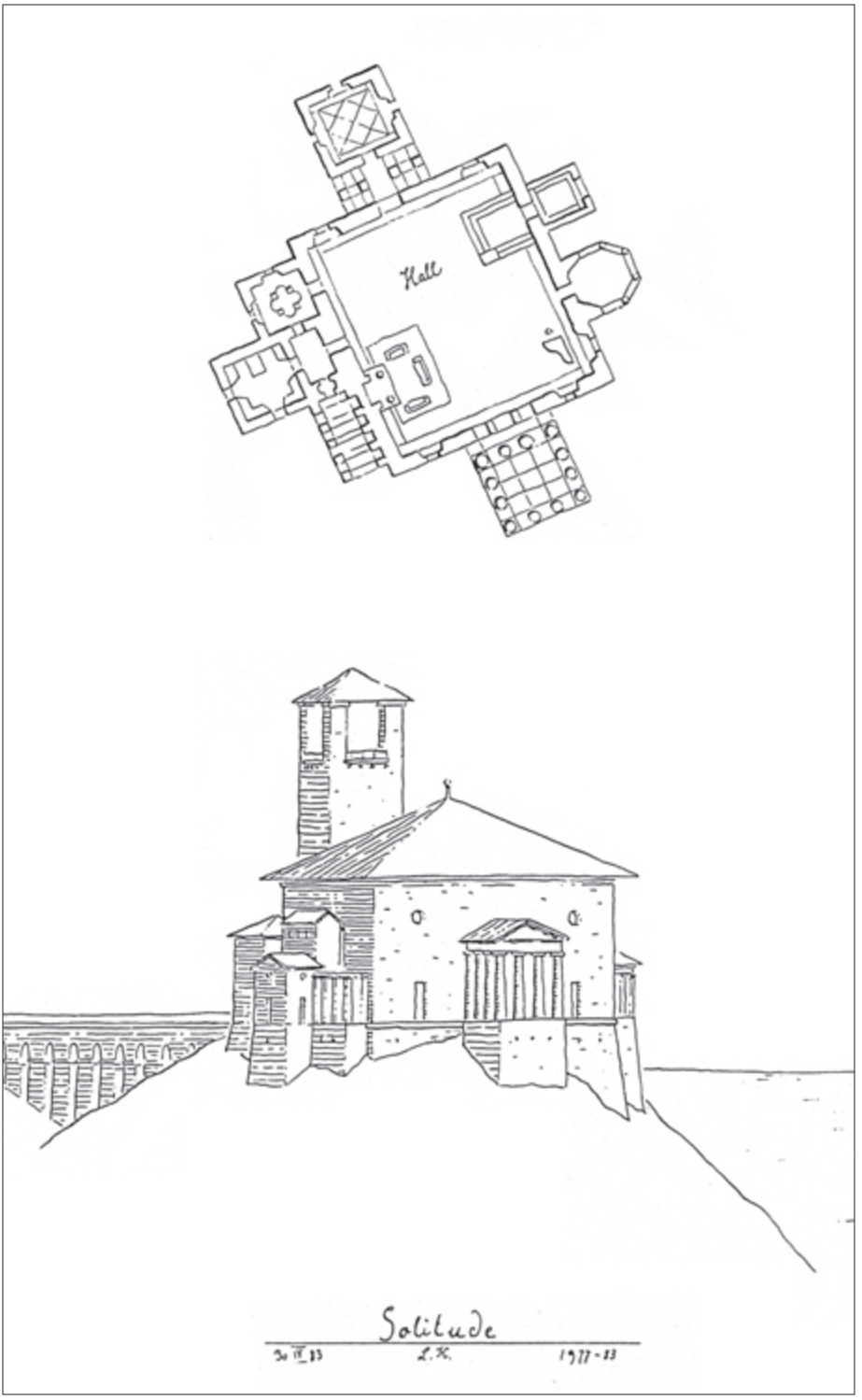
Image on Left: DAVID LIGARE, LOOKING ACROSS THE NEW PYRAMID LAKE



CHAPTER I

ASPECTS OF MODERNITY

"Fate triumphs when you believe in it." Simone de Beauvoir
"Fate is the excuse of weak character." Romain Rolland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INTRODUCTION

CONTEMPORARY PROSPECTS

FROM POLITICAL PLURALISM TO ARCHITECTURAL PLURALITY

THE AUTHORITY OF THE ARCHITECT IN A DEMOCRACY

TOWARDS A COEXISTENCE OF DOCTRINES

THE ARCHITECT'S CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE

INTRODUCTION

If, one day, for some mysterious reason, all the buildings, settlements, suburbs and structures built after 1945 – especially those commonly called "modern" – vanished from the face of the earth, would we mourn their loss? Would the disappearance of prefabricated tower blocks, mass housing estates, commercial strips, business parks, modular production halls, university campuses, schools, and new towns, damage the identity of our favorite cities and landscapes?

If, on the other hand, some parallel phenomenon destroyed in one fell swoop the whole of our pre-World War II architectural heritage, namely all "historic" buildings, hamlets, villages, bridges, and cities, what would be the significance of such an event? What would be a greater loss? Replacing all pre-1945 buildings with post-war buildings, or the reverse?

In terms of built volume, both heritages are approximately equal; comparing them as alternatives allows us to appreciate the fundamental differences in their nature: not only their specific symbolic, functional and aesthetic, but also their civilizing and emotional qualities, their power of attraction, identification or repulsion. Has so-called "modern" architecture, with its insatiable drive for autonomy, its *tabula rasa* approach and celebration of change and revolution, really liberated us from our "historic" past? Or has it made us more dependent? Looking back over the experience of the past fifty years, can we honestly maintain that the architecture and urbanism of our time are in their substance comparable in worth and achievement with those of other ages? It is true that a Baroque city needs no Gothic presence and that Renaissance towns can easily do without the vestiges of other eras. But is this the case with recent settlements?

The Modern Movement lays claim to be the sole legitimate expression of its time; but has it lived up to its ambitions? Does the extraordinary technical and scientific inventiveness of the industrial age have a parallel in its architecture and urbanism?

In fact, twentieth-century urbanism is just so many forms of "sub-urbanism" and the latter has become the symbol of the failures of our towns and societies. But is there an art of building cities today? Are there modernist towns that seduce and attract us? Are there recently-built cities and villages where we would freely choose to live? Is there really a true choice in architecture?

PROJECT FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE LYCÉE CLASSIQUE IN ECHTERNACH, L.K., 1970. This historic center, which was destroyed in the 1944 Rundstedt offensive, was completely rebuilt with traditional artisan methods, forms, materials, and techniques in the record time of six years. L.K. witnessed this hugely popular exercise during childhood holidays and later attended secondary school in the reconstructed abbey. This project was elaborated while L.K. was working for James Stirling and represents his first radical break with modernism, a search for alternative, more acceptable forms of modernity.

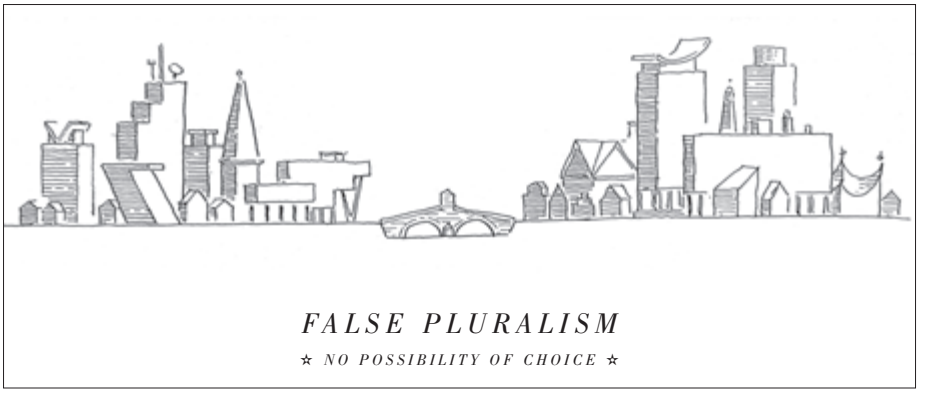
CONTEMPORARY PROSPECTS

After the violent criticisms and the almost total rejection of one type of architectural modernism – a rejection culminating in the Prince of Wales's resounding speech at Hampton Court in 1984 – it would seem that the establishment, in return for a few superficial adaptations of the product and its presentation, has again taken control of public commissions. Today criticism and public objections rarely cause delays in major architectural and urban projects. There appears to be general resignation in the face of a universally dominant neo-modernist architecture. But the absence of criticism does not necessarily mean acceptance.

It is obvious that, apart from a few exceptions, modernist buildings are as a rule not in keeping with historic city centers: the Palais-Royal, the Maison Carrée in Nîmes, the Louvre forecourt, the National Gallery East Wing in Washington DC, were not in need of their recent additions. We may well ask ourselves what has been enhanced by what . . . If these costly operations had been built in the suburbs, there would be scarcely a mention of them. But millions of visitors are used as evidence of the exceptional popularity of various ostentatious modernist monuments, whereas the popularity of Port-Grimaud and Williamsburg is denounced as politically dangerous. It may be absurd to force recalcitrant architects to design traditional facades in historic centers; but surely it is even more absurd to pretend that without aggressive interventions historic centers lack vitality and dynamism.

In fact, there exist today two kinds of modern architecture. An official, standardized, international-style architect's architecture that may be perceived as arrogant or even provocative; and a private architecture, often based on regional models, that attempts to blend naturally and harmoniously with the architecture of existing landscapes and cities. The former is the product of public commissions and competitions, generally symbolized by new towns, public infrastructure, and institutions (hospitals, schools, cultural and administrative centers, housing estates, what the French call "*grands travaux,*" and prestige buildings in general). The latter, nearly always the result of private initiatives, ranges from individual homes to new villages and towns in keeping with their region whether it be Virginia, Florida, Dorset, Provence, New England, Andalusia, Bavaria, Tuscany, or Japan.

FUNDAMENTAL CHOICES OF MODERNITY.
Modernism is only one expression of modernity. Mixing traditional and modernist forms produces discordant results. Aesthetic chaos however, is not the inevitable fate of democracy. Modern traditional townscapes and architecture are a legitimate form of modernity. Democratic modernity can definitely be a matter of plural but coherent choices.

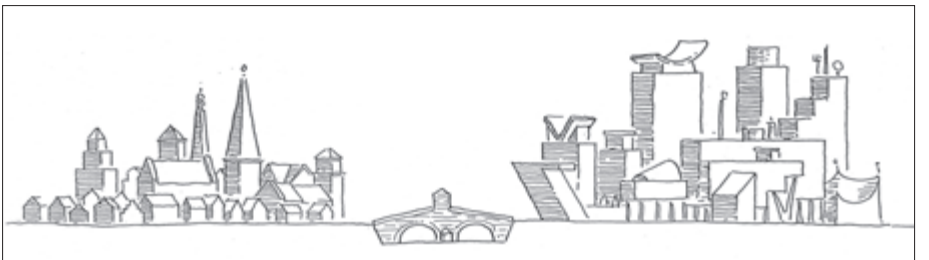


FALSE PLURALISM

✭ *NO POSSIBILITY OF CHOICE* ✭

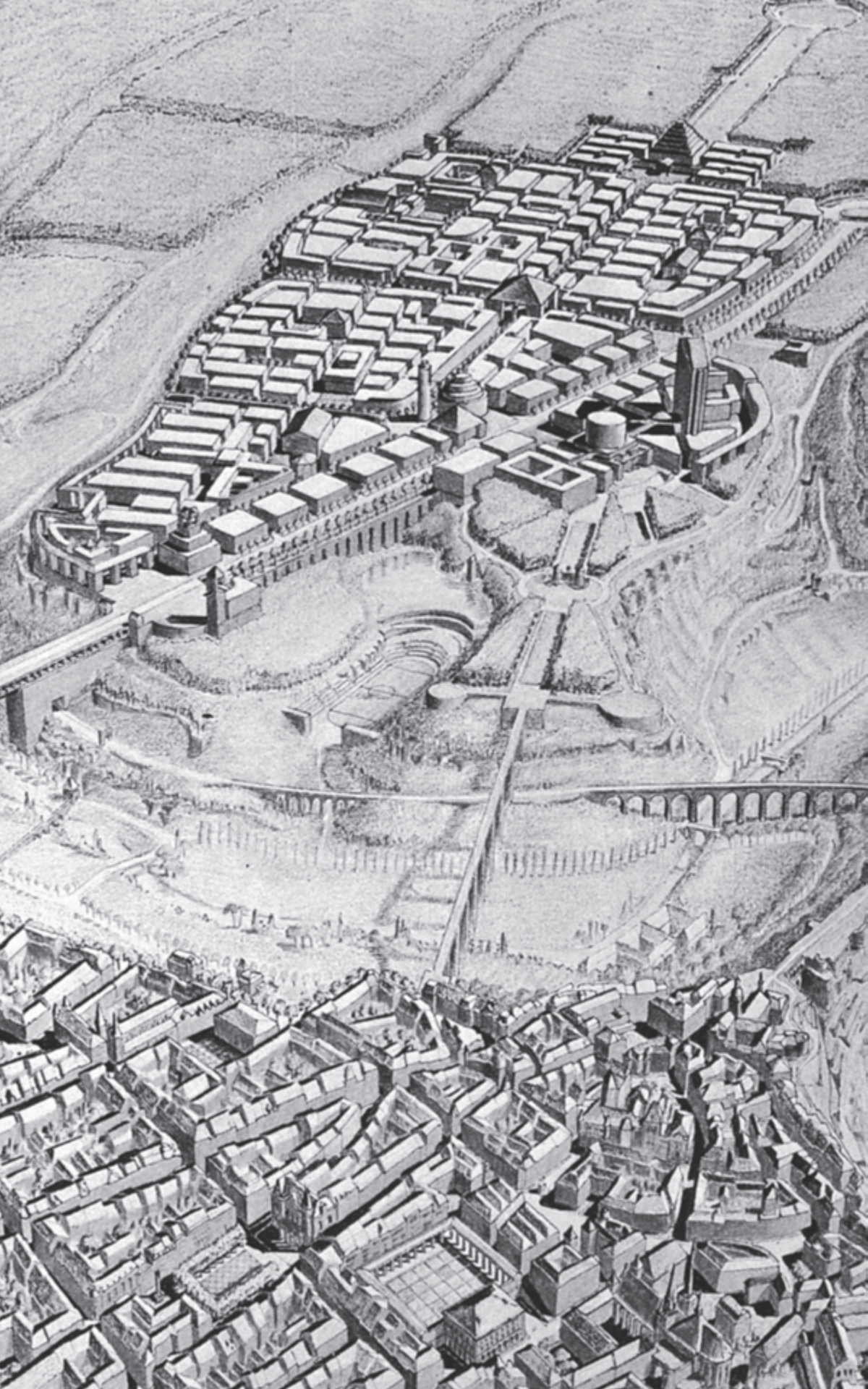
The ideologists cannot ignore such an overwhelming democratic reality and keep their distance by denouncing it. Instead of investing intelligently in this social phenomenon, instead of civilizing it through intelligent criticism and education, they confine themselves to contempt. And yet in all advanced democratic countries, leisure architecture and the private residential sector are dominated by models of traditional architecture.

Urban developments such as Richmond Riverside and Poundbury in England, Port Grimaud, Pont Royal en Provence, Gassin and Plessis-Robinson in France, Seaside, Windsor and Kentlands in the United States, Lomas de Marbella and La Heredia in Spain, and the restoration of Havana vieja, prove that large-scale modern infrastructure, even whole villages and towns, based on traditional architecture and urban planning that meet the needs of a developed industrial society, can be built within current budgets and deadlines. These may be the first concrete demonstrations of a form of modernity that is not alienating, kitsch or aggressive but serene and urbane.



TRUE PLURALISM

✭ *FREEDOM OF CHOICE* ✭



FROM POLITICAL PLURALISM TO ARCHITECTURAL PLURALITY

Freedom of choice, freedom of expression and respect for the law are the precondition of a political democracy. Plurality of lifestyles, of beliefs, and therefore of styles of architecture and cities are its natural expression. There cannot be a "single democratic style," any more than there can be a "single democratic party."

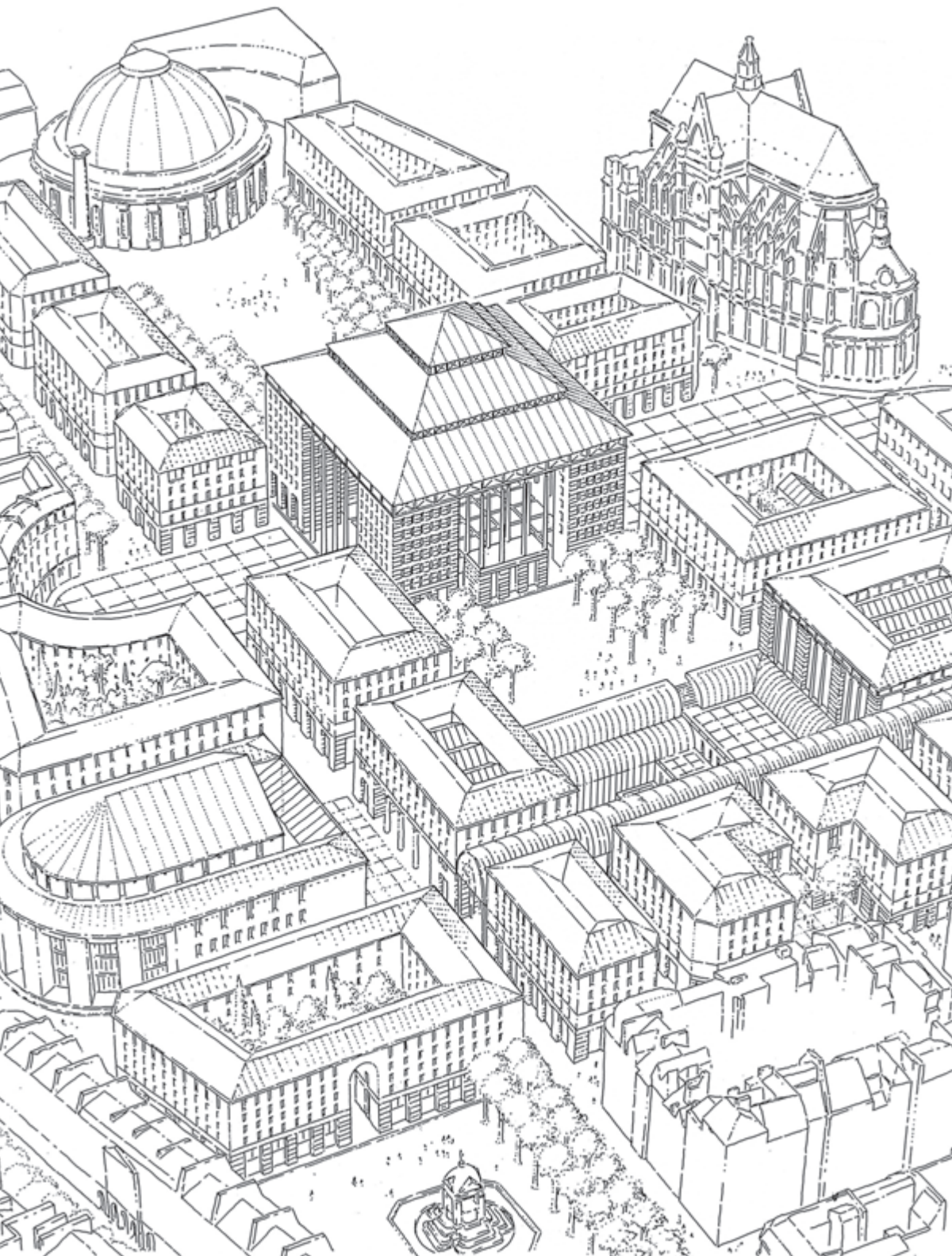
It is an error to make democratic pluralism responsible for the chaotic appearance of our cities and countryside. In no way does it express the peaceful, organized, conventional functioning of civil society, and neither does it facilitate its harmonious development.

Differences of opinion can be sorted out in violent confrontation or resolved in civilized debate. Instead of leading to a generalized disorder, a plurality of urban and architectural visions can be channeled to produce a plurality of towns and villages with very different structure, architecture and density, each with its own unity, harmony and specificity.

The melting pot is not the only form of pluralism. We would not expect Picasso to paint like Balthus, nor Maillol to produce a Zadkine. Pluralism does not necessarily mean a confusion of styles, but rather a respect for differences. The exacerbation of disagreements, on the one hand, and the leveling out of differences, on the other, are avoidable extremes of democratic practice.

Democracy means first of all conviviality of differences, and their free development in a context of tolerance. The existence of opposing parties is largely accepted as the constituent basis of political life. In general, political parties no longer think of themselves as mortal enemies but as representatives seeking to achieve specific political aims, without putting in jeopardy the survival of the political system. The unique merit of the American Revolution is that it instituted tolerance as the basis of democratic debate. Tolerance does not mean that we abandon convictions; on the contrary, it gives a variety of political options – and, by extension, of distinct and dissimilar conceptions of towns and architecture – the chance to succeed coherently without any debasing compromise.

Even the shape of our towns is a matter of choice and not of fate; those who claim otherwise choose to ignore that the hodgepodge appearance of our towns is not the result of uncontrolled laissez-faire but of erroneous planning ideology. The fiasco of the suburbs is the tragic illustration. At the end of the



twentieth century, architectural pluralism is many decades behind political pluralism.

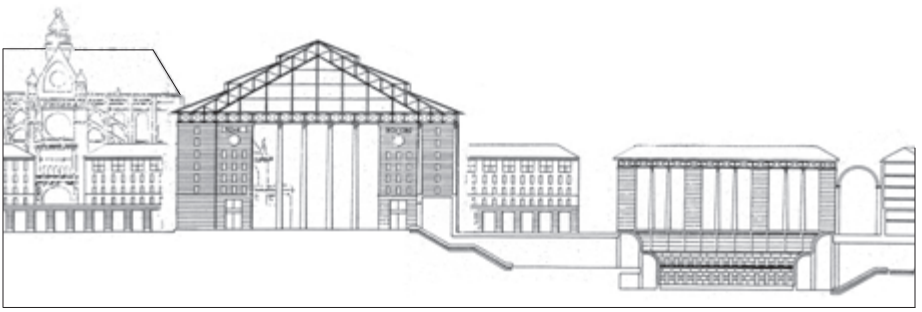
The theoretical and practical chasm created by fifty years of dogma has ravaged not only cities but minds as well. The new architectural metatheories, the new dogmas of uncertainty, irony, deconstruction, rupture, discontinuity, and the ersatz are contrary to reason, to any logical thought process.

According to Aristotle, democracy is not an ideal form of government but in every way preferable to tyranny. A plurality of architectures reflecting the diversity and tolerance of democratic political parties is necessary to find a way out of the chaos of our cities and prevailing mentalities.

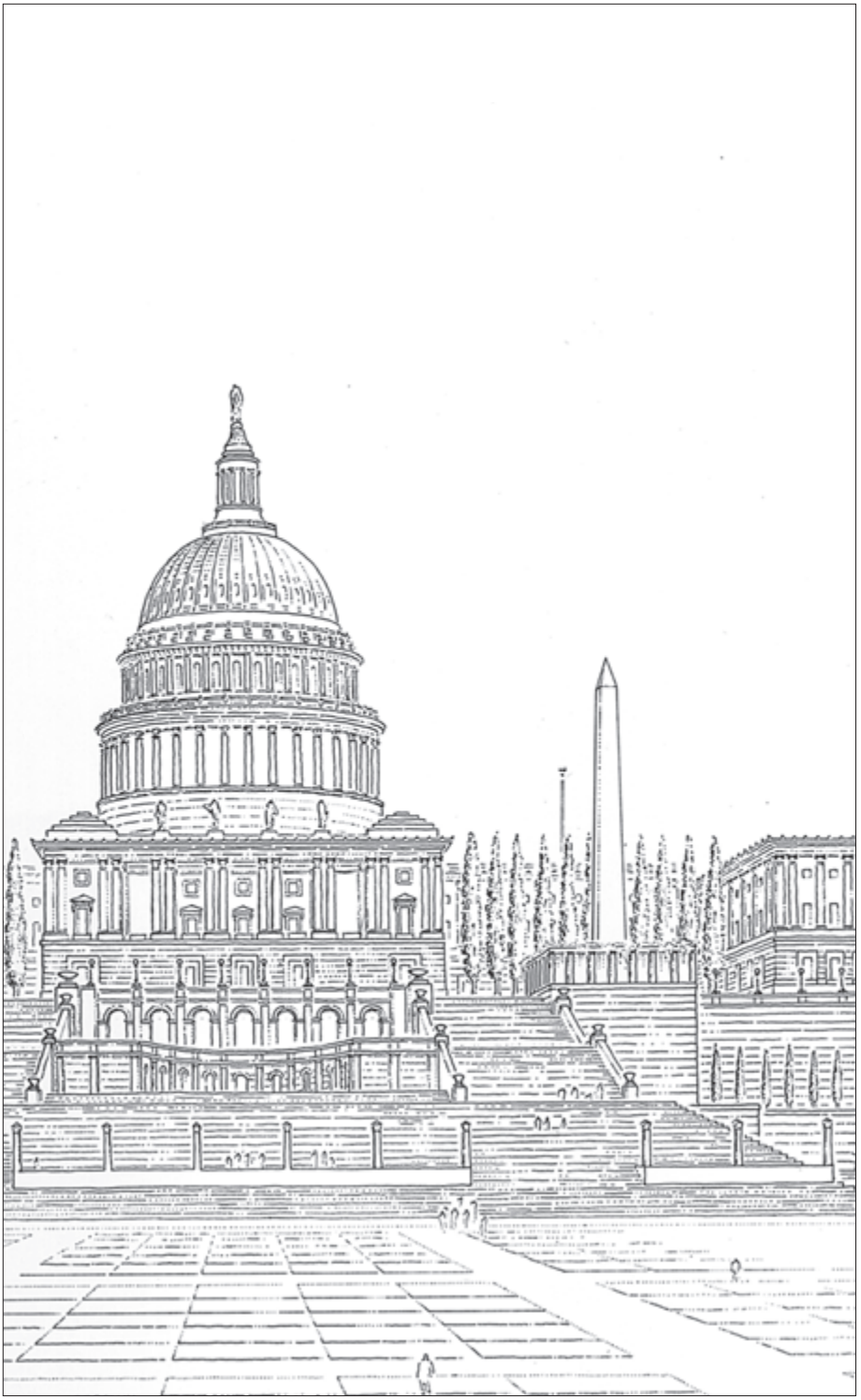
If cultural democracy seems to develop more slowly than political democracy, its concrete manifestations in the field of architecture are now so obvious and positive that they can no longer be ignored.

In fact, we can affirm that a diversity of urban and architectural visions is a natural illustration of the diversity of political opinions. Modernity in architecture can no longer be conceived as a unitary and indivisible phenomenon; it is irreversibly plural, embracing widely divergent and even contradictory conceptions.

The only certainty that we can have with respect to the architecture of tomorrow is that the reign of single-party democracy has been superseded. Pluralism, then, is our imperative. It does not lead fatally to environmental and conceptual chaos but contains the seed for free and fundamental choices.



QUARTIER DE LA GRANDE HALLE, PARIS, L.K., 1979.
This monumental "tetrapylon," a combination of a vast covered hall and a public square, houses a civic center and an hotel. It contrasts in scale and materials with the micro-urban blocks and was specifically designed to give coherence and centrality to this martyred quarter. Twenty years ago an energetic step was taken in the wrong direction. Its sordid state today is further proof that modernist transplants simply do not take in traditional townscapes.

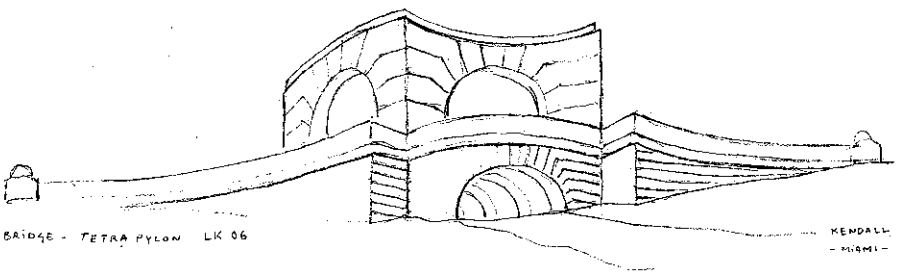


THE AUTHORITY OF THE ARCHITECT IN A DEMOCRACY

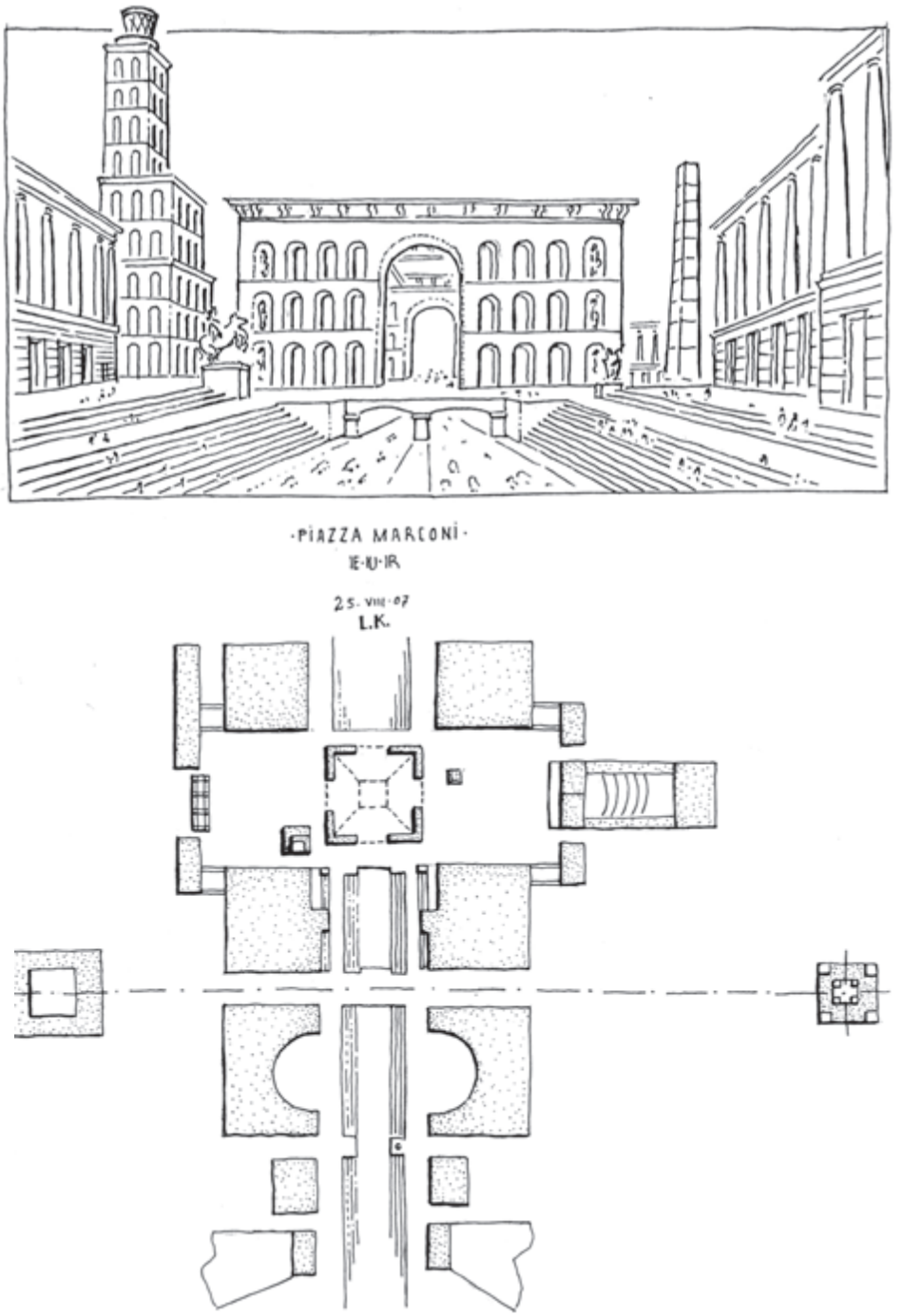
Although civic action groups seeking to influence decision-making in the fields of architecture and urban planning are multiplying, there are no such organizations trying to interfere in the design of airplanes, refrigerators, or dentists' chairs. The authority of a profession that fulfills its promises is rarely contested.

In fact, these demands for participation are indicators of the citizens' mistrust of modernism; there are no protest movements against traditional architecture. The accused blame the terrible post-war failures on the fact that they were responsible for only a tiny portion of the buildings which were built. But this is to ignore two important facts: if architects had controlled the whole building sector (as was the case in the former Soviet Union or in the New Towns), the effects of modernism would have been aggravated; and, moreover, the majority of buildings in periods of great architecture were not designed by architects either, but by peasant builders or craftsmen guided by the parameters of tradition and custom. The moral and artistic authority of architects was never challenged. Their models were emulated by both rich and poor. The authority of traditional architecture, which endures in democratic countries, cannot be explained by popular ignorance, by autocratic rule, or by psychological manipulation. It is a pronounced market trend that transcends fluctuations in taste and fashion.

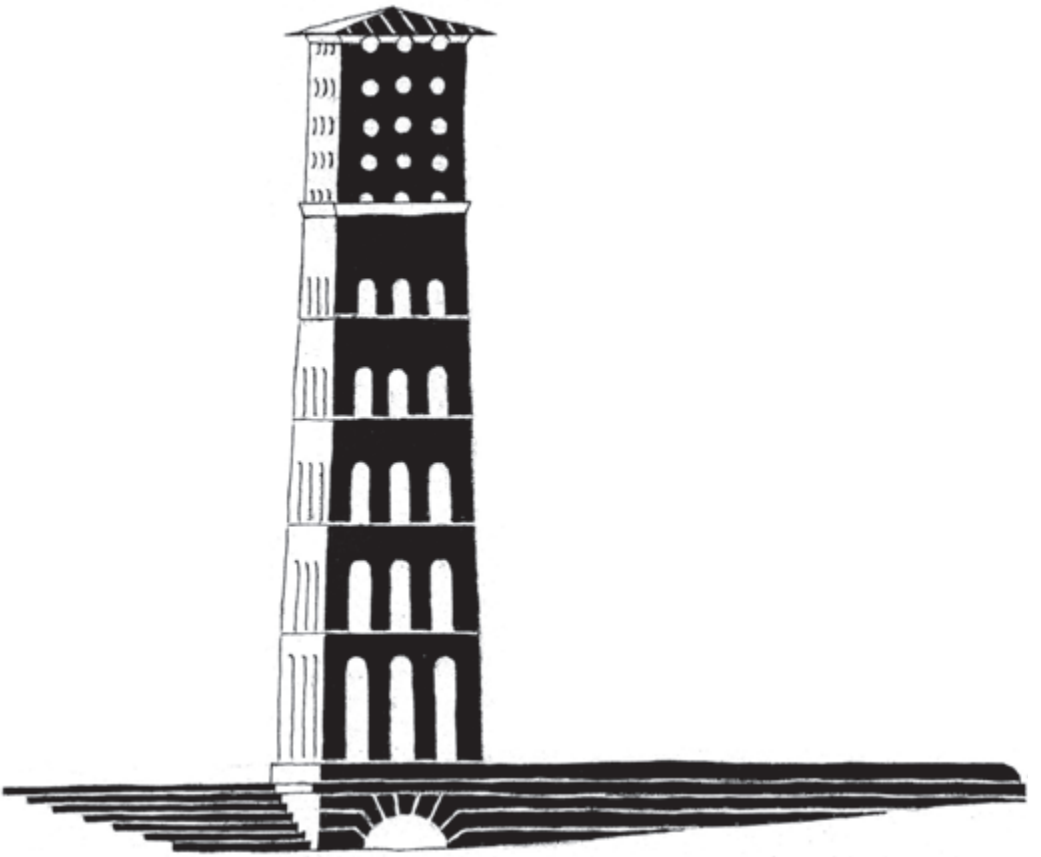
Unlike the democracies of today, traditional cultures do not experience insuperable gulfs between elite and common culture. Their tastes differ in quality and refinement but not in substance or form. It is ironic that in democracy popular taste continues to have easier access to aristocratic art than to democratic art.



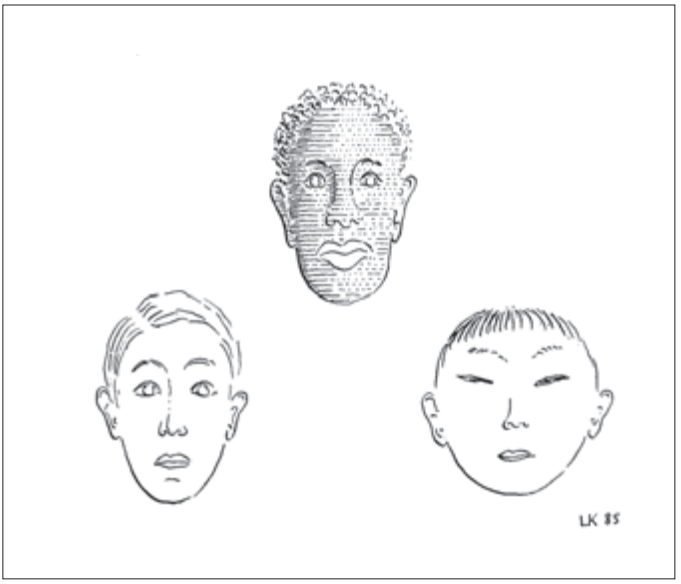
PROJECT FOR THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITOL HILL IN WASHINGTON D.C., L.K., 1985. Classical architecture is not "political." It is not partisan because it is the expression and privileged instrument of the polis, of the public realm.



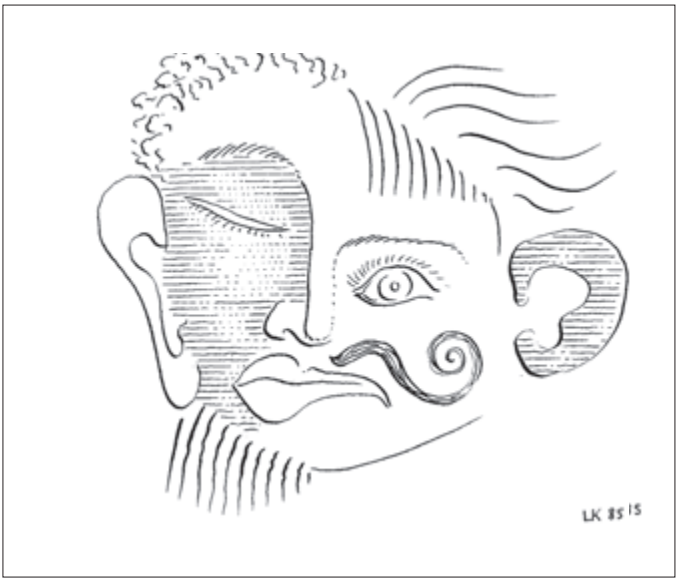
The so often decried monumentalism of the EUR quarter outside Rome is paradoxically not caused by the excessive monumentality or size of the fascist monuments, but by the absence of a contrasting vernacular fabric. It is a true urban creation which after sixty years of vulgar architectural abuse calls out for an intelligent and sensitive completion.



MOLE per EUR - ROMA
L.K. IX 2007



TRUE PLURALISM



FALSE PLURALISM

TOWARDS A COEXISTENCE OF DOCTRINES

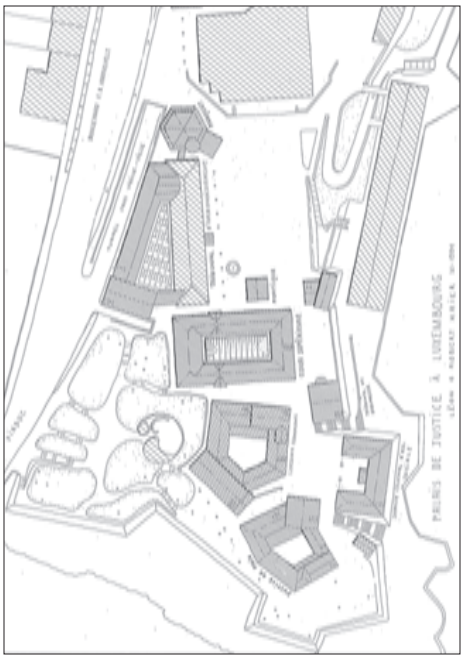
"Anti-architecture" and "Anti-art" do not represent an adequate body of doctrines on which a new professional authority could be founded. As long as artists assume the right to arbitrarily decide what is or is not art, it is logical that the public will just as arbitrarily reject their assumption. But lost authority does not disappear into thin air; it is taken over by other agents and directed against the loser. Thus professional architectural practice has become a daily battle of justification, not only against bureaucratic and technocratic constraints, but equally against social resistance, which is becoming more organized and articulate every day.

To practice a profession, a body of thought and practices that are rational and transmittable is a pre-requisite. Enduring professional authority is founded on knowledge and know-how, on learning and skill. Without this basis there can be no responsibility or judgment, teaching or authority. Nowadays, building sites are commonly perceived as a threat rather than as a promise of things to come. As a result the historic authority of architects, urban planners, and artists is considerably diminished and easily ignored. A growing number of public inquiries, competitions, and debates remain blocked in irreconcilable points of view often aligning architects against everyone else. This has justifiably reduced public confidence in the profession.

After fifty years of brainwashing, citizens may be resigned to the banality of modern buildings but, when they have the choice, a majority (including modernist architects) prefer to live, work, spend their holidays and their retirement in traditional homes (just like François Mitterand, Ieoh Ming Pei, Mick Jagger, Pierre Boulez, and Norman Foster). While recognizing this hypocrisy, their double standard leads them to condemn as public vice what they practice as private virtue.

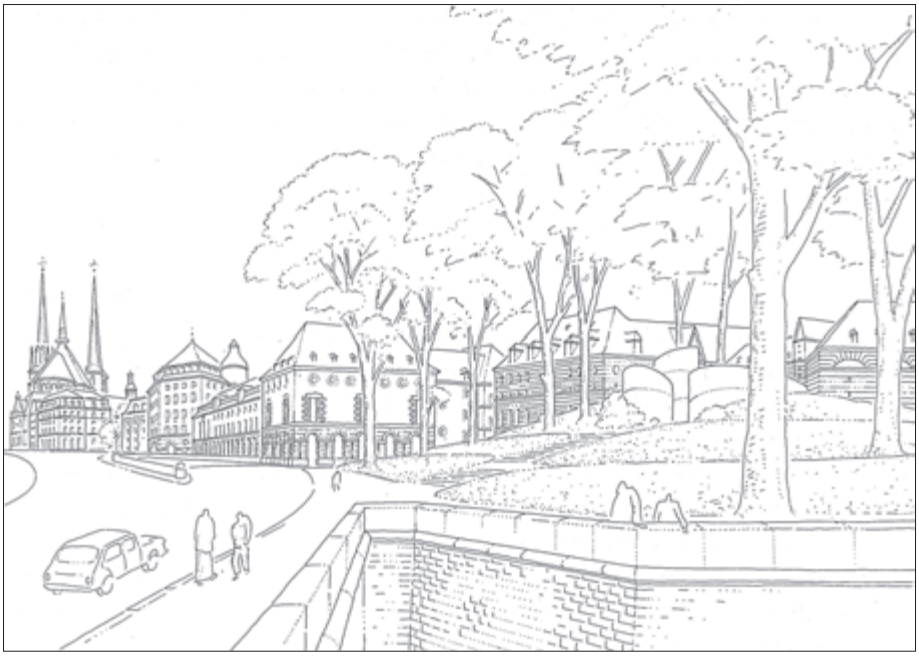
While applauding their hypocrisy one may also blame their double standards, leading them to condemn as a public vice what they practice in private as virtue.

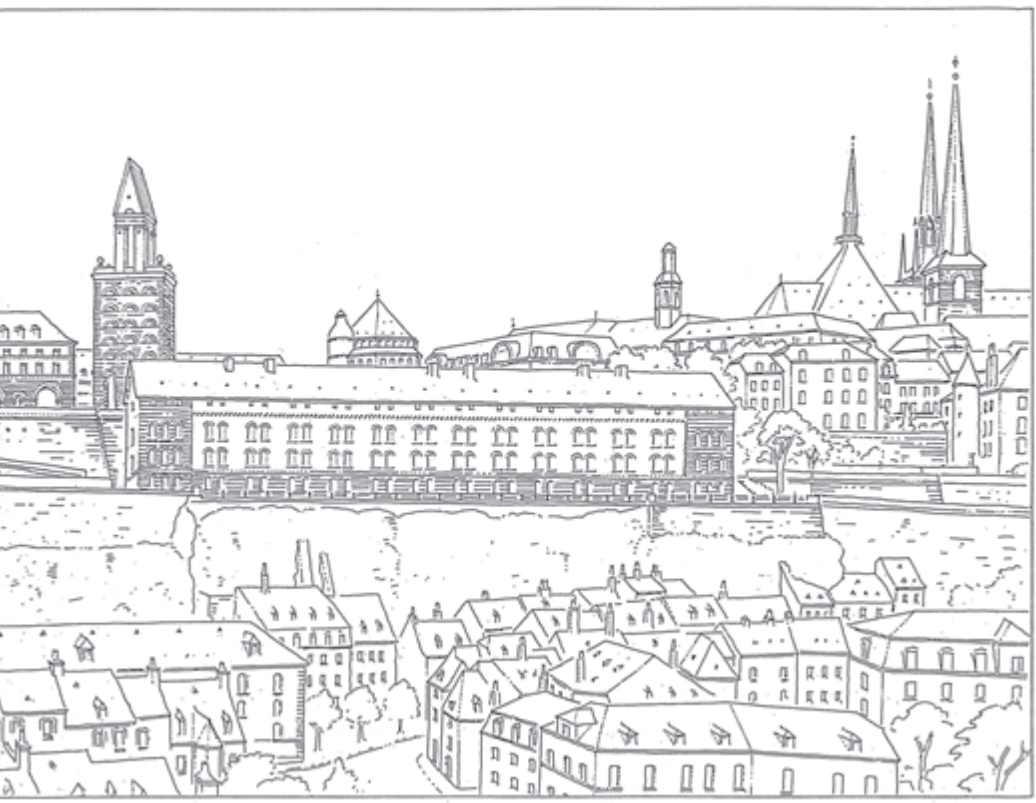
We can in fact no longer speak of a coherent discipline when talking about modern architecture. What cannot be united is best separated. But such a division requires that the differences be recognized and clearly articulated. This represents the condition for true plurality. The reconstitution of the architects' authority can gain legitimacy only if all members of the profession accept the plurality of modern architecture with reciprocal tolerance. The freedom of choice that exists in the fields of politics and religion can also be achieved in the fields of architecture and urbanism. In the future, professional bodies of architects will consist of professionals who, by common accord, call themselves architects even if their views on architecture are irreconcilable. These institutes will be ecumenical councils consisting of separate chapters, each representing clearly named and defined doctrines and principles according to which its members are bound to act and assume responsibilities.



THE NEW LAW COURTS, LUXEMBOURG, Project–LÉON & ROB KRIER, 1991–1995. Built according to modified design by ROB KRIER, 1997–2008.

Situated on a spectacular Acropolis-like promontory, surrounded by 150 feet deep canyons. Instead of presenting itself as a monolithic "palace", the "city of justice" is composed of eight distinct buildings. Each harbors and symbolizes an autonomous department: the Tribunal, the adjacent Public Prosecutors Office, the High Court, the Common Services, the Youth Tribunal, and the Tower of Winds. All buildings are organized around their central atrium or courtyard. Each building can be located, named, and identified with utmost ease because its individual building type can be recognized and understood at a glance, the architecture reflects its relative hierarchical and symbolic status. The buildings are separated by public streets, squares, and promenades.





THE ARCHITECT'S CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE

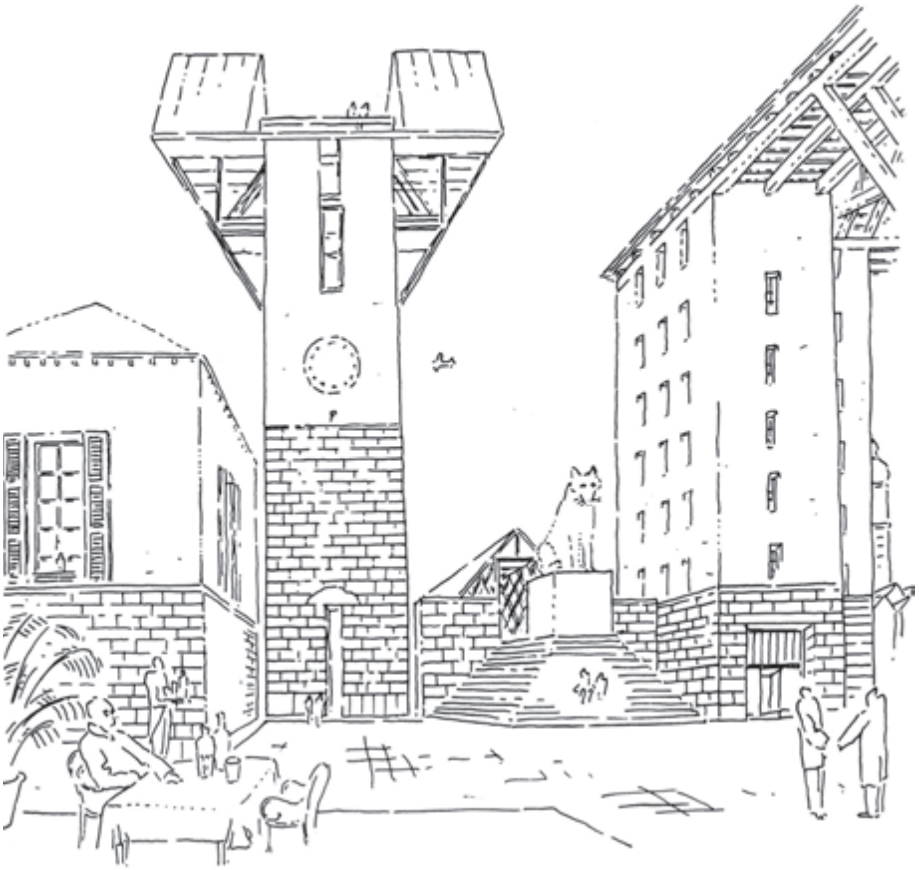
The architect states: "I built this house, this city, this headquarters, this barracks." This is also the language of the king, the house owner, the craftsman. For it is a mere figure of speech. Only craftsmen and artists use the words correctly when they say: "I built this or that . . ." What the architect and the sovereign are attesting is that, in varying degrees, they have intervened, in a drawing that is the basis of an urban or a tectonic conception, in the design that is an authoritative graphic document, be it sketched, drawn or engraved on paper, wood, metal or in the sand.

Drawings are at once fragile as objects and powerful in their influence on the shaping of the material world.

Just like the written page, a drawing has little intrinsic value; its power and authority lie in the capacity to describe, suggest, direct and give a form and shape to objects, structures and events according to a precise aim and vision. The authority of a drawing is like that of a banknote, a symbolic one. The same drop of ink can be used to draw a concentration camp or a splendid city; the gesture of an architect may decide whether a human community lives in a city which corresponds to its dreams, or in one which is crowded, chaotic, and hostile.

Drawing is an exercise of authority and is therefore an eminently moral activity involving personal responsibility and conscience, a sense of truth, justice, beauty, scale and proportion. As is the case with all good things in life – love, good manners, language, cooking – leaps of genius are required only rarely. The poet does not excel by inventing new words or languages but when, by subtle arrangements of otherwise familiar terms, he reveals human predicaments in new and poetic ways.

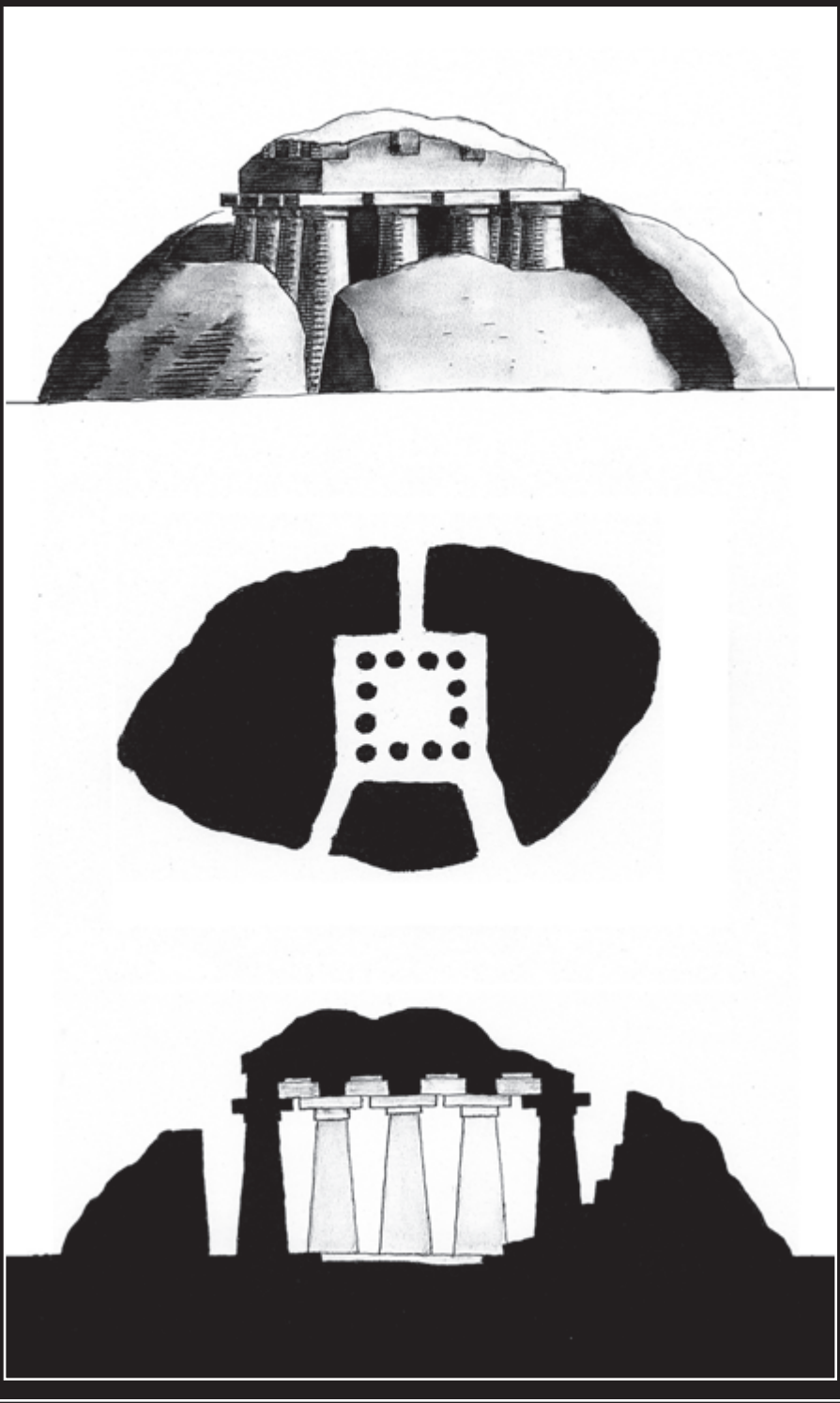
NEW DEVELOPMENT ON THE BANKS OF THE WESER IN BREMEN, L.K., 1978–1980.



Drawing permits almost every license; in the same way as writing and the spoken word, it offers little resistance to excess or caprice.

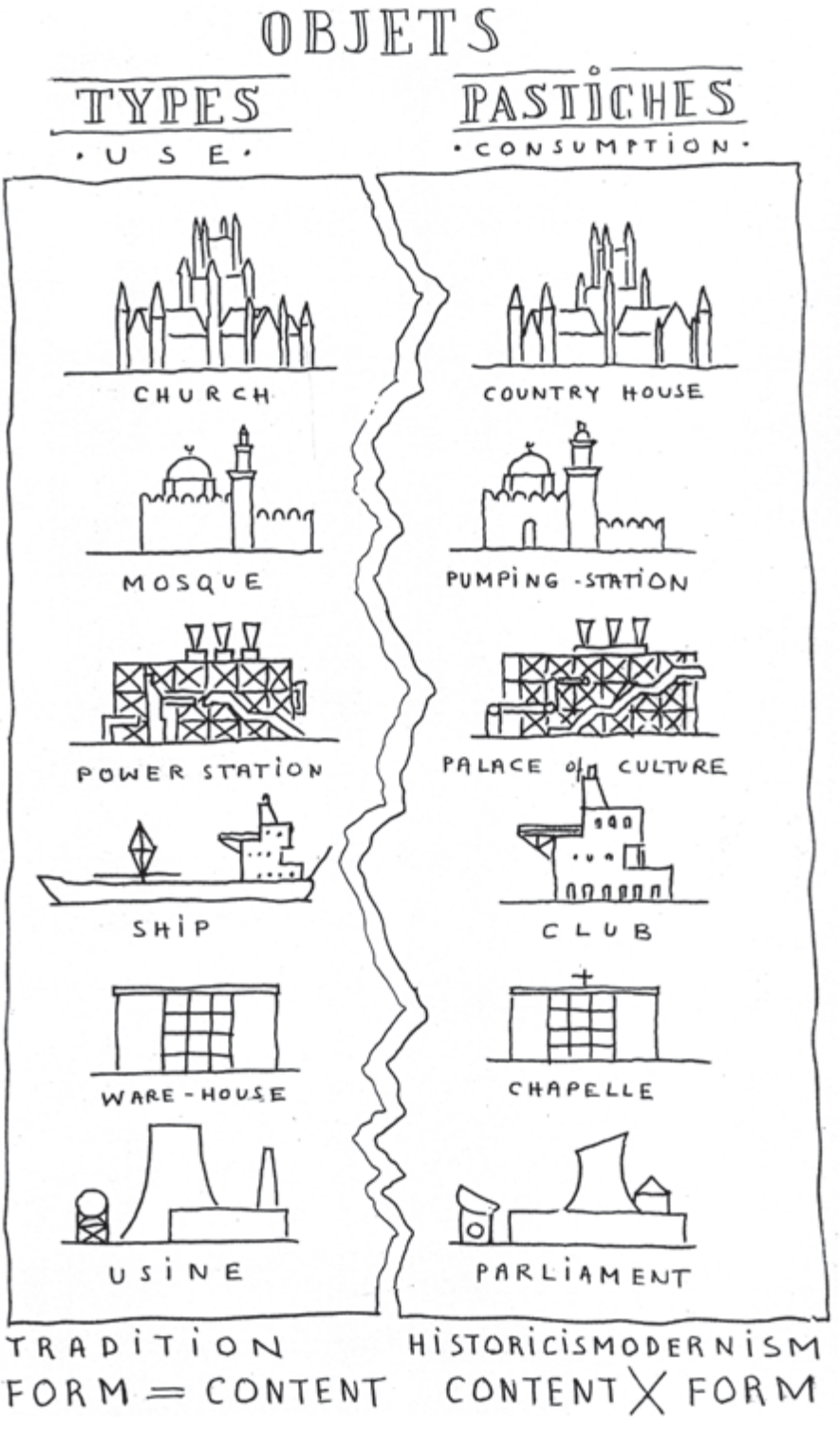
Buildings inspired by the shape of a camembert or an artichoke mean nothing in terms of architecture; nor do they add anything to the cultures or the technology that have so superficially inspired them.

If we consider the categorical imperative of Immanuel Kant, "Act only according to the maxim of a kind that you may want its principle to become a universal law," the architect may ask himself the question: What would be the consequences if the maxim on which my project is based became a general principle of architecture and urbanism? Build therefore in such a way that you and those who are dear to you will use your buildings, look at them, live in them, work in them, spend their holidays in them and grow old in them with pleasure.



CHAPTER II

NATURE OF THE ARCHITECTURAL OBJECT


OBJETS
TYPES
• U S E •
PASTICHES
• CONSUMPTION •
CHURCH
COUNTRY HOUSE
MOSQUE
PUMPING -STATION
POWER STATION
PALACE of CULTURE
SHIP
CLUB
WARE-HOUSE
CHAPELLE
USINE
PARLIAMENT
TRADITION
HISTORICISMODERNISM
FORM = CONTENT
CONTENT X FORM

RES PUBLICA • RES PRIVATA

NAMEABLE OBJECTS AND SO-CALLED OBJECTS

DEFINITION OF THE ARCHITECTURAL OBJECT

TRUE AND FALSE MONUMENTS

TECHNOLOGY AND ARCHITECTURAL EXPRESSION

SUMMARY OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS

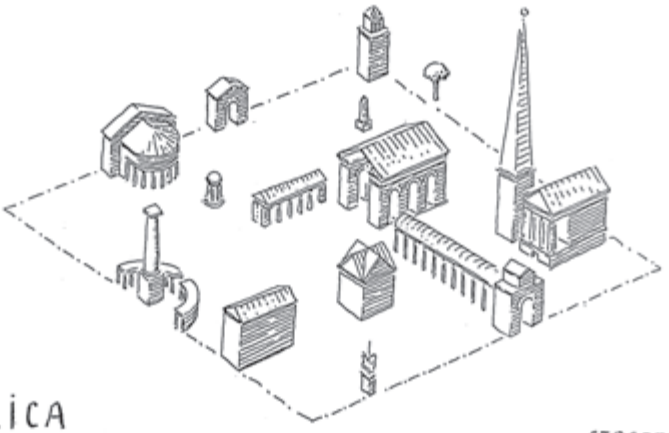
modernity • modernism • tradition

typology • type • composition

invention • innovation • discovery

Traditional architecture:
vernacular building and classical architecture

Region and style



RES PUBLICA

MONUMENTS
WITHOUT
STREETS or SQUARES

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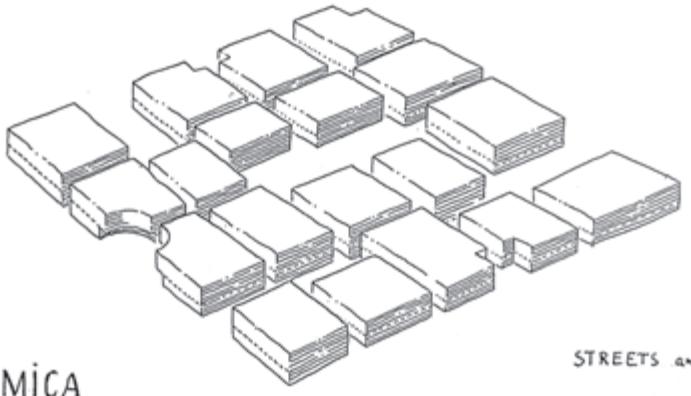

RES ECONOMICA

STREETS and SQUARES
WITHOUT
MONUMENTS

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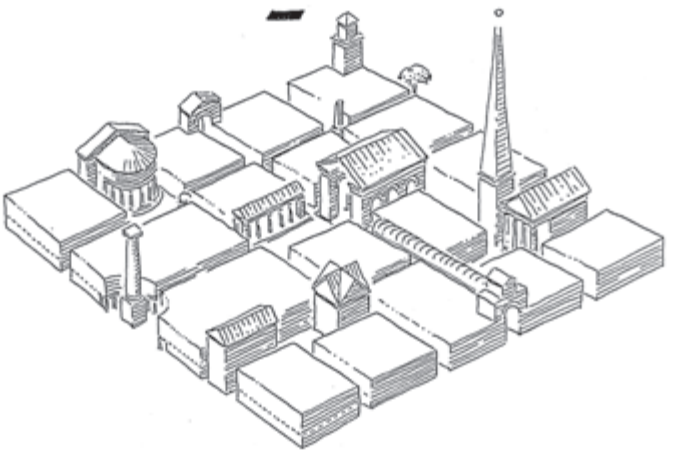


CIVITAS

THE
TRUE
CITY

LK 83

RES PUBLICA • RES PRIVATA

All traditional architecture clearly distinguishes between public symbolic institutional buildings, on the one hand, and utilitarian private buildings, on the other. The former express the qualities of things public, of *res publica* – dignity, solemnity, and grandeur; the latter, the private activities of housing, commerce, and industry in the *res privata* and the *res economica*. If factories have the facades of cathedrals and houses resemble royal palaces, if museums look like assembly lines and churches like industrial warehouses, a basic value of the body politic is threatened, the very nature of its public realm is in peril. But what is the nature and hierarchy of architectural objects?

NAMEABLE OBJECTS AND SO-CALLED OBJECTS

Whether it is a place of worship, a telephone box, or a garden wall, a building expresses the fundamental values of its builders and designers. It is a symbol of our state of mind and our self-respect. Symbols are at once expressive and instrumental. They are not merely means of expression or mirrors; they are tools, means of safeguarding civic and personal values, of encouraging and supporting them. If a man is dressed in rags his confidence suffers, as does the confidence others have in him. He is in crisis with himself and with the world. Famously, we make buildings and then they make us.

It is impossible to conceive of buildings in isolation, cut off from the world. Whatever their size, buildings influence the world. They must be conceived as parts of a whole. Buildings are never neutral; they always have either a positive or negative influence. They are active.

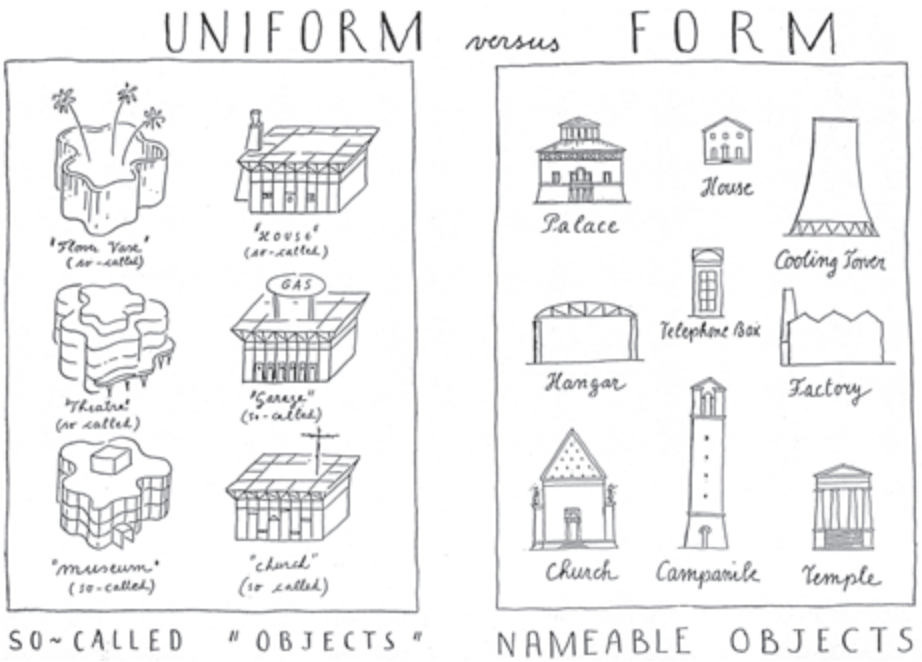
Humans can add only a few footnotes to the margin of the universal plan that inspires, governs, and indefatigably rebuilds the universe. Cities and individual buildings can be no more than imperfect realizations of these addenda. The city, the street, the square, the temple, the house, the shed, the greenhouse, the bell tower, the atrium, the vault, the column, the architrave, the frieze, the roof, the door, the window are inventions that complete and enrich the typological inventory of nature. They are architectural objects, the names and ideas that form the unique world of the human race. According to Hannah Arendt, it is their artificial nature (*arte factum*) that makes them so eminently human. But this continent of the human soul is as limited as the world itself. The typology of architectural objects and components is not endlessly expandable. Thus the majority of "architectural innovations" of this century are, strictly speaking, not innovations, but mere transfers of ideas from other disciplines; they simply cannot replace either the established vocabulary,

technology, or the nature of the architectural object. Owing to inadequate appropriation, innovations often lose their instrumental and even their expressive capacity; they create a world of so-called objects, of false solutions, of ill-adapted, even hostile, tools – buildings that ape airplanes, liners, trains, oil refineries, silos, containers . . . instead of enriching the world, merely clutter it.

The incapacity for true innovation, the sterility of this so-called innovative ideology, is clearly revealed in the confusion of its terminology. A garden city is not a true city and not a true garden; a *Büro-Landschaft* is not an office and not a landscape; a curtain wall is not a wall and not a curtain; a multipurpose hall is no real substitute for a church, a theater, or a sports hall. The same is true of a *fenêtre musicale*, a business park, a reception area, a machine for living, a satellite city, green belts, open spaces, etc.

This "anti glossary," the instrument and expression of a so-called "abstract reality," is proof that concrete urban reality is the product of a civilizing vision and not the automatic result of mere building zeal. An industry that creates nonplaces, unreality, and abstract objects can be only a transitory phenomenon.

The basic typological inventory of architectural objects is necessarily limited and cannot be reinvented indefinitely. These typologies, these technologies, and their terminology represent a primordial human creation, the inventive power of which surpasses the discoveries of fire and the wheel because, for architecture, nature provides only indications and analogies, not models to imitate.



DEFINITION OF THE ARCHITECTURAL OBJECT

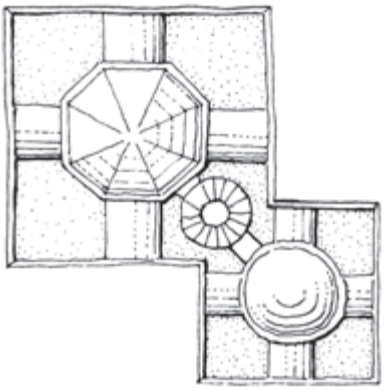
"In the language of symbols, there are no misunderstandings. The latter appear only in the case of discursive reflections."
Alexis Pontvick

Errors of concept, scale, proportion, measure, form, content, style, type, and character are often publicly discredited by the spontaneous use of pertinent nicknames. Modernist architecture continues to earn them in profusion: the "pregnant oyster" for the Berlin Congress Hall, the "madhouse" for Corbusier's Unité d'habitation in Marseilles, the "clothes drier" for the Architecture Museum in Rotterdam, the "boot" for the Euralille skyscraper, the "parking" for Queen's College, Oxford, the "oil refinery" for the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the "radiator" for the United Nations Building in New York, the "bunker" for the Palais des Festivals in Cannes, etc. The nickname does not indicate a lack of understanding on the part of the public but rather its ubiquitous capacity for discernment.

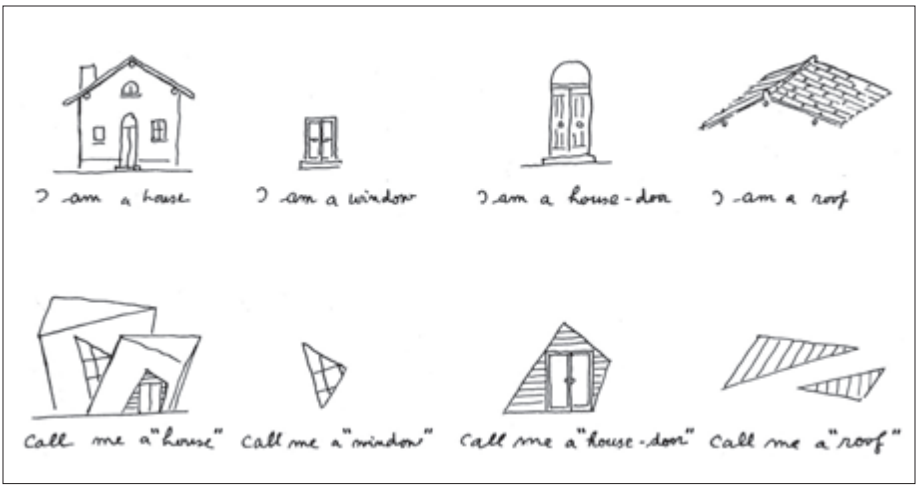
In a Babylonian suspension of form and common sense, the nickname reestablishes a relationship of truth between the name and the named object, it reveals a meaning that intellectual confusion or artistic pretension have temporarily obscured. The nickname is the most definitive and devastating criticism that a building can receive because it does not err. It is a revenge of language in general, and of words in particular. The nickname is the correct name for a kitsch object.

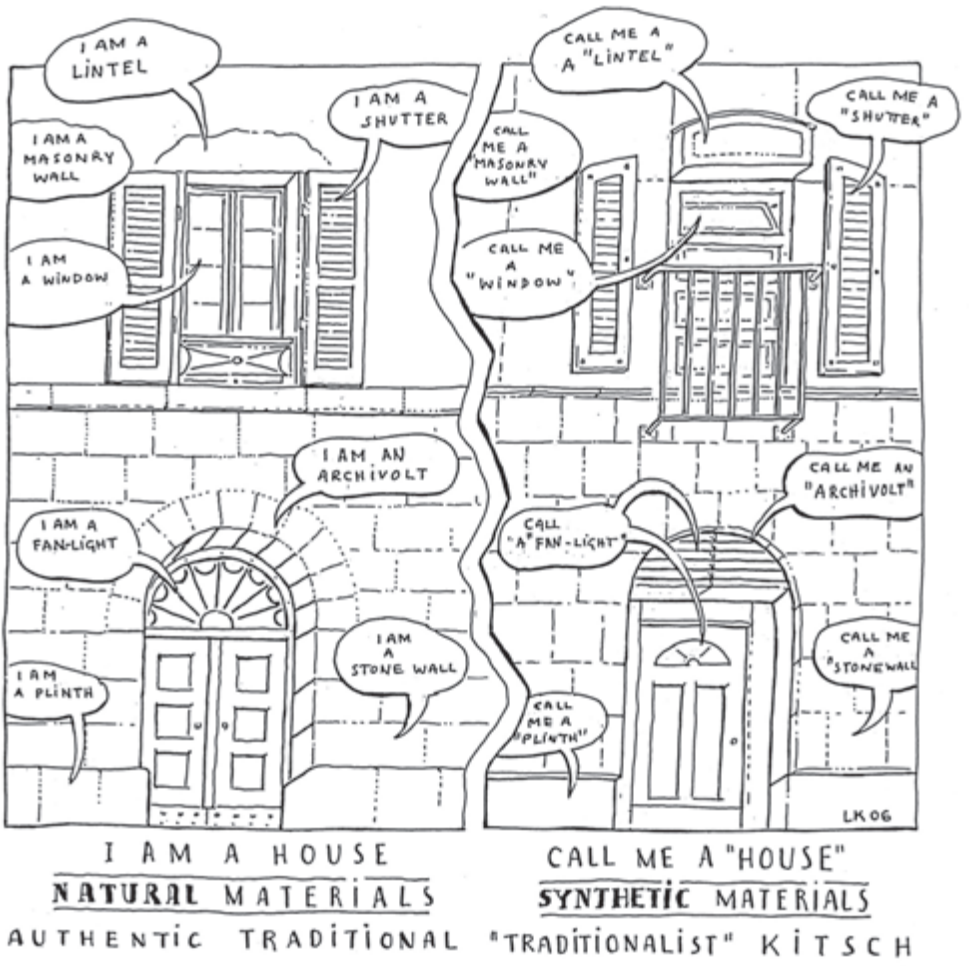
Classical monuments and traditional buildings are not mocked in this way: they are called by their name or by their function: cathedral, town hall, palace, cooling tower, etc. The coherence of symbol and meaning, of form and content, of style and rank is not the result of a transitory convention but of a decisive agreement. In architecture, a convention cannot exist or have any durable value unless the appearance and the function of the building have an evident relation of truth. A convention, by definition, cannot be forced. And yet that is what modernism practices systematically by confusing coffee pots with wine bottles with the result of breaking glass and burning limbs.

Arbitrary form and "uni-form" are two ways of devaluing the power of forms. The arbitrarily uniform and uniformly arbitrary are symmetrical phenomena. The impoverishing uniformity and uniform poverty of mass typologies condition each other.



HEPTAPYLON, L.K., 2005.


I am a house
I am a window
I am a house-door
I am a roof
Call me a "house"
Call me a "window"
Call me a "house-door"
Call me a "roof"

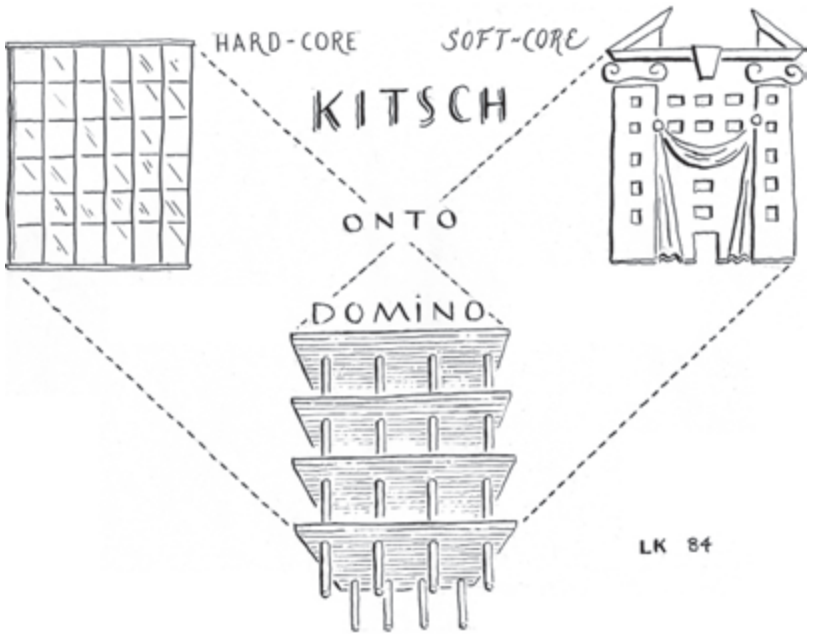

I AM A LINTEL
I AM A SHUTTER
I AM A MASONRY WALL
I AM A WINDOW
I AM AN ARCHIVOLT
I AM A FAN-LIGHT
I AM A STONE WALL
I AM A PLINTH
CALL ME A "LINTEL"
CALL ME A "SHUTTER"
CALL ME A "MASONRY WALL"
CALL ME A "WINDOW"
CALL ME AN "ARCHIVOLT"
CALL A "FAN-LIGHT"
CALL ME A "STONE WALL"
CALL ME A "PLINTH"
LK 06
I AM A HOUSE
NATURAL MATERIALS
AUTHENTIC TRADITIONAL
CALL ME A "HOUSE"
SYNTHETIC MATERIALS
"TRADITIONALIST" KITSCH

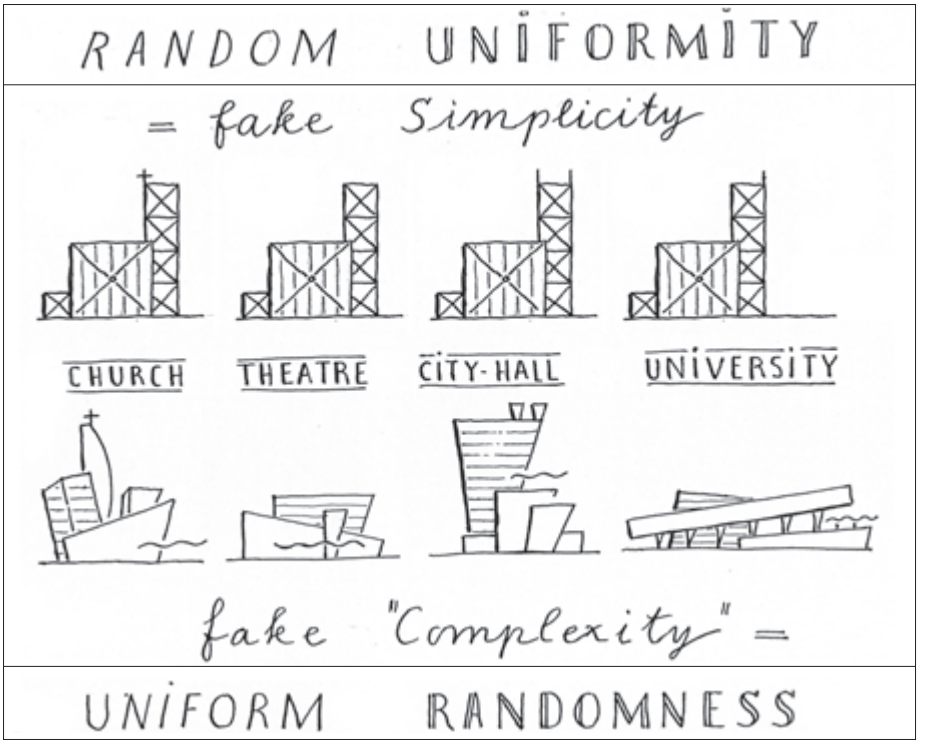
TRUE AND FALSE MONUMENTS

The utilitarian skyscraper and "land-scraper" are fake monuments. They house private uses in public posture and disguise. They are horizontal and vertical overconcentrations of one utilitarian function under a single roof. Not only does symbolic nakedness show through the curtain-thin walls but the utilitarian character of their obese volumes humiliates the dignity and rank of public buildings.

Civic buildings, arenas, temples, theaters, shrines, libraries, churches, spires, fountains, museums, thermae, memorials, terminals, and bridges are the true symbolic and public elements in a city. They are privileged and exclusive objects of monumental architecture. The public squares and the city skyline are their privileged realm and stage, their sacred protectorates. The fake "monumentality" of the utilitarian skyscraper reveals itself in the meanness of its ceiling heights and room sizes.

Whatever its architectural pretensions, a suburban shopping mall will never acquire any significant symbolic value regardless of its architectural cladding, be it commercial, nautical, or "deconstructural." When located in a commercial strip its very purpose prevents it from acquiring meaning other than its utilitarian function.





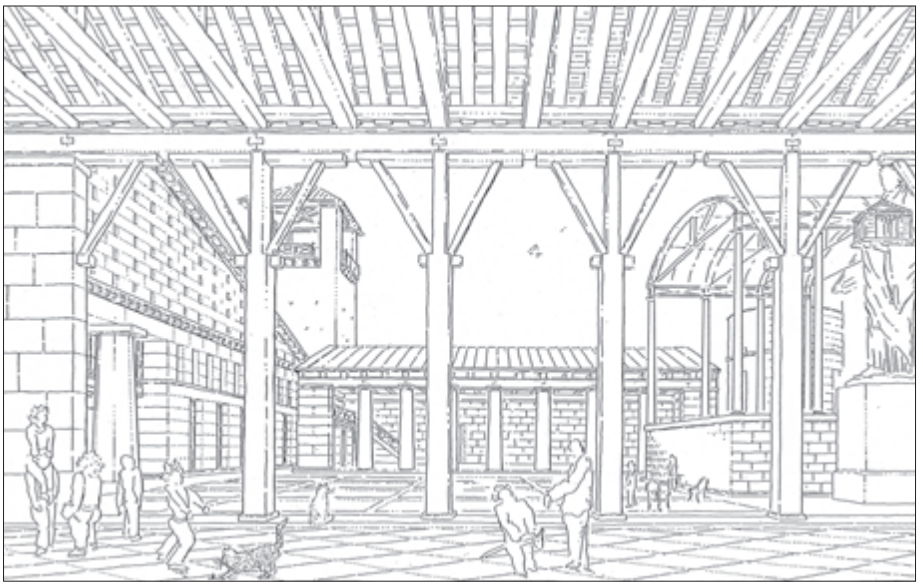
The contrary is also true; the monumental beauty and dignity of a historic center will not survive being transformed into a purely residential, commercial, business, or leisure district. The excessive concentration of a single utilitarian function cannot create true monumentality; even the monumental accumulation of private housing units (whether they are publicly financed or not) will not endow them with true civic status. It follows that . . .

WHATEVER THEIR QUANTITY, DENSITY, OR CONCENTRATION, SINGLE UTILITARIAN FUNCTIONS QUITE SIMPLY DO NOT CONSTITUTE ADEQUATE TYPOLOGICAL MATERIAL TO CREATE BUILDINGS OF MONUMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE. THE MONUMENTAL PRESUMPTION AND THE HOLLOW RHETORIC OF A KARL MARX HOF IN VIENNA OR RECENT FLASHY EXPERIMENTS ALWAYS PAINFULLY REVEAL THEIR DOMESTIC PURPOSE. CONVERSELY, A PUBLIC HALL OF IMMENSE SIZE WITH INSUFFICIENT CEILING HEIGHT AND INADEQUATE ARCHITECTURE WILL NEVER ACQUIRE TRUE MONUMENTALITY AND CIVIC SIGNIFICANCE.

TECHNOLOGY AND ARCHITECTURAL EXPRESSION

The most important antagonism that exists in architecture today is not between tradition and modernism but between authentic traditional culture and its caricature. The construction industry has almost universally replaced: (1) load-bearing building techniques by the separation of the load-bearing structure from the external facing; (2) natural building materials by artificial substitutes. The reduction of external walls into simple screens, tiny but continuous differential movements between skeleton and skin, and the replacement of natural materials by synthetic materials of inferior quality have resulted not only in modernist-looking but also in traditional-looking buildings that are both fragile and vulnerable, with limited lifespans and high maintenance costs. They often transform traditional-looking buildings into authentic fakes, resulting almost always in postmodernist or traditionalist kitsch.

The crisis of authenticity, caused by the inadequacy between building technology and architectural appearance, affects at closer analysis all contemporary styles of architecture, including those of modernism. Their industrialized looks are seldom the outcome of true industrial processes.

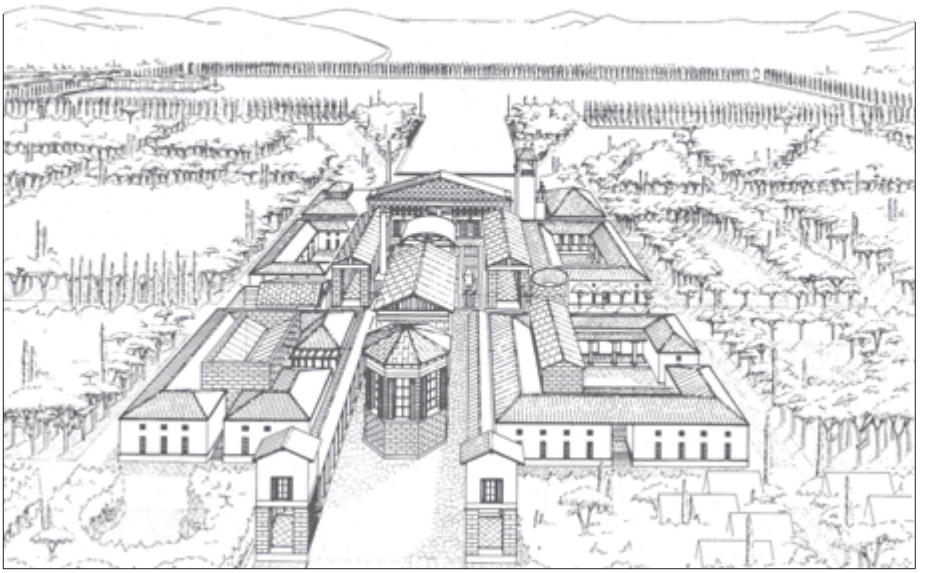


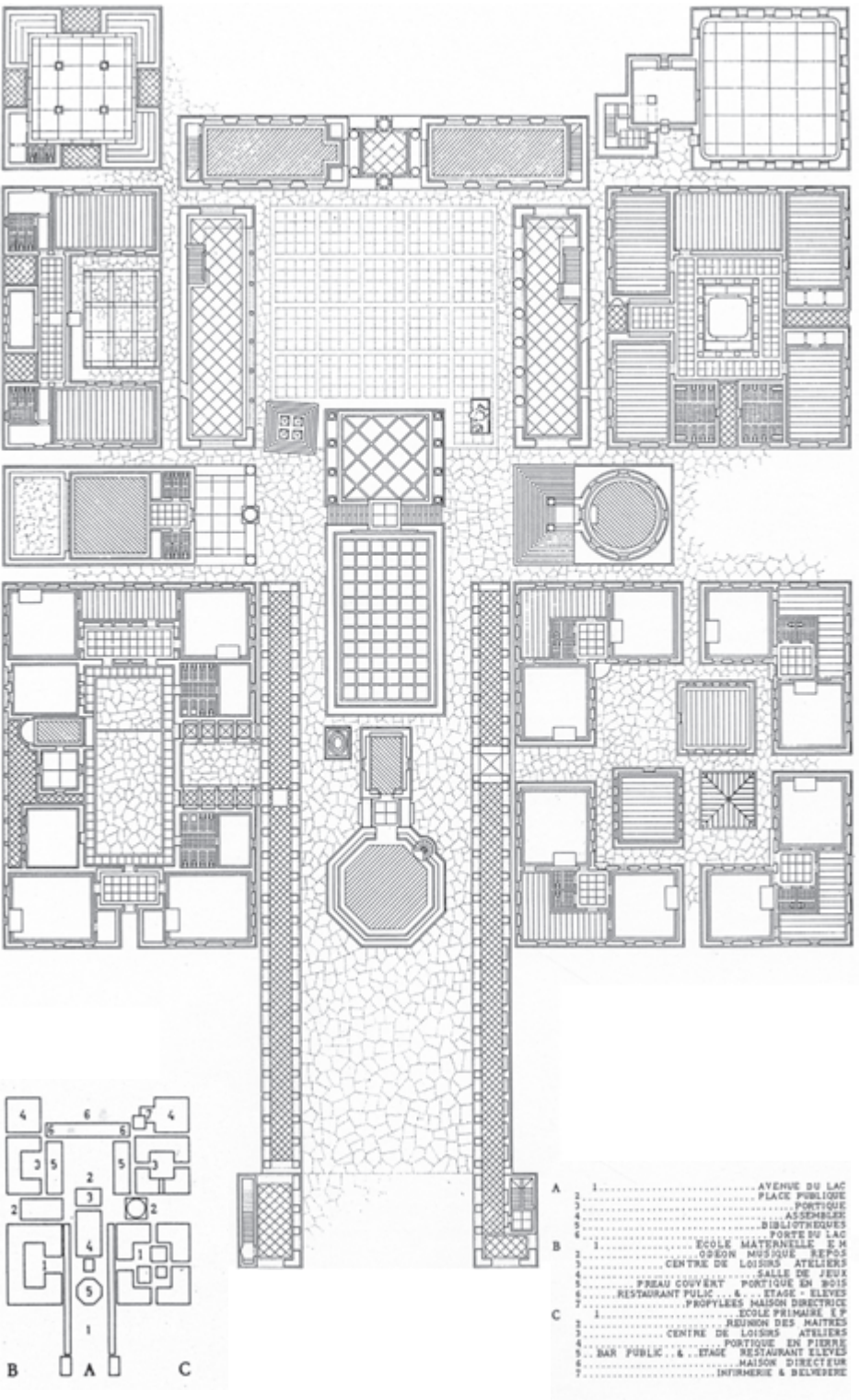
SCHOOL AT SAINT-QUENTIN-EN-YVELINES, L.K., 1977–1979.
The public square is formed by fragmenting the large school program into its constituent parts. View from the portico toward the restaurants and the assembly building. Images on Next Page: Class and exercise rooms form the micro-urban blocks of this small city-school. In contrast with the sober buildings, those with a more important civic function such as the library, assembly hall, belvedere, odeon, restaurants, and sports halls are distinguished by their larger volumes, higher ceilings, and more elaborate architectural articulations.

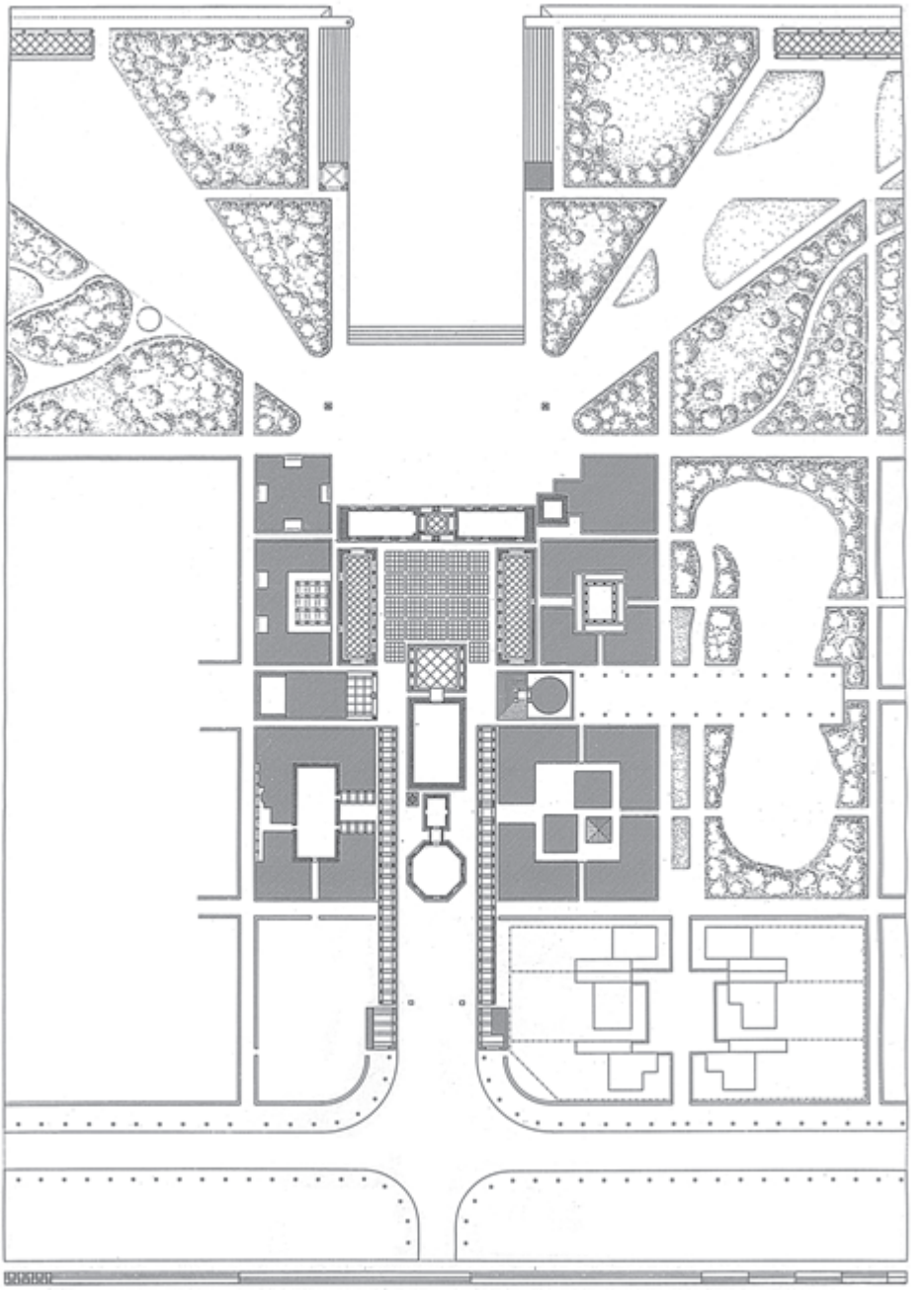
PLAY HALL BELVEDERE RESTAURANTS SPORTS HALL

The ontological rupture between appearance and reality has become a banality. The typological, morphological, and tectonic depth of traditional architecture has been replaced by a surface depth. Traditional building techniques and natural materials are indispensable to ensure structural, architectural, and aesthetic integrity. The marginally higher initial investment is generally vindicated by increased durability, and reduced maintenance costs, and ultimately by more pleasing and better building.

After years of failed promises and experiments, the critical situation of the suburbs leaves us little choice but to seek practical solutions. These are, in fact, readily available, but it is evident that a modernist bias harboring ideological and psychological blockages causes traditional solutions to be ignored, discarded, and even discredited. There exists a direct link between the problems of our cities and the planning language. The lack of clarity in the vocabulary, the mixing-up of terms, and the extensive use of meaningless professional jargon stand in the way of clear architectural and environmental thinking. The terminology used here is, itself, sometimes an object of disagreement. For this reason I shall now define some of the main concepts and notions.




A
1 AVENUE DU LAC
2 PLACE PUBLIQUE
3 PORTIQUE
4 ASSEMBLEE
5 BIBLIOTHEQUES
6 PORTE DU LAC
B
1 ECOLE MATERNELLE E M
2 ODEON MUSIQUE REPOS
3 CENTRE DE LOISIRS ATELIERS
4 SALLE DE JEUX
5 PREAU COUVERT PORTIQUE EN BOIS
6 RESTAURANT PULIC . . & . . . ETAGE - ELEVES
7 PROPYLEES MAISON DIRECTRICE
C
1 ECOLE PRIMAIRE E P
2 REUNION DES MAITRES
3 CENTRE DE LOISIRS ATELIERS
4 PORTIQUE EN PIERRE
5 BAR PUBLIC . . & . . ETAGE RESTAURANT ELEVES
6 MAISON DIRECTEUR
7 INFIRMERIE & BELVEDERE
B
A
C



SCHOOL AT SAINT-QUENTIN-EN-YVELINES, L.K., 1977–1979.
Instead of a vast single building with one door under one roof, this school is composed of fifteen independent buildings, thus avoiding the customary labyrinthine corridors and cul-de-sacs. The buildings form a pattern of public streets, alleyways, and squares integrated with surrounding streets and walks of the neighboring public park.

a large building programme is no longer conceived as a single building under one single roof and with one entry alone

AUTHORITARIAN STYLE

TWO KINDS
OF
MONSTERS

DEMOCRATIC STYLE

Such a programme may be conceived like a TOWN with buildings articulated according to their function Type and importance

A TOWN *is not* A LARGE BUILDING

A BUILDING *is not* A SMALL TOWN

A LARGE COMMISSION *cannot be* ONE SINGLE BUILDING

A CITY *cannot be made of* CORRIDORS
and air conditioned ATRIA

A CITY
is made
of STREETS *and* SQUARES
BUILDING BLOCKS *and* MONUMENTS

LK 78

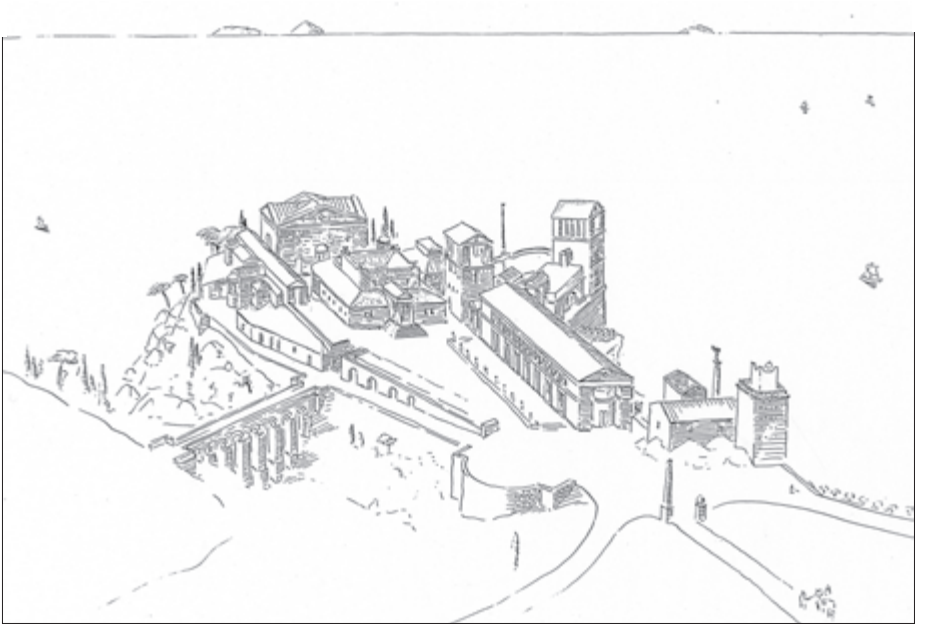
SUMMARY OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS

modernity • modernism • tradition

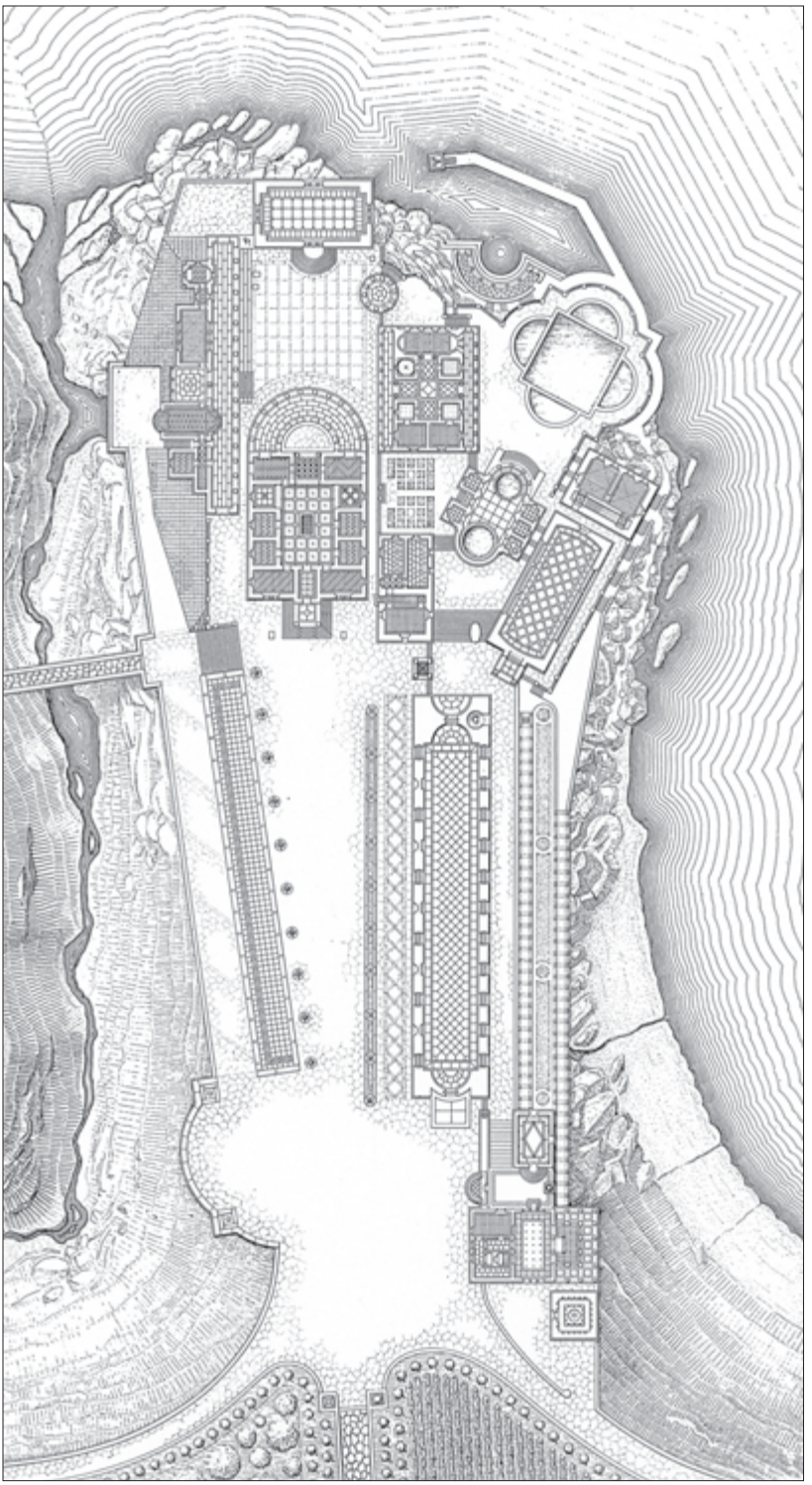
Today, when artists, critics, historians, and even the public speak of the "modern movement" what they mean is the modernist movements. The terms "modern" and "modernist" are regularly confused. The former has a chronological meaning; it indicates time, the contemporary period; the latter is an ideological designation.

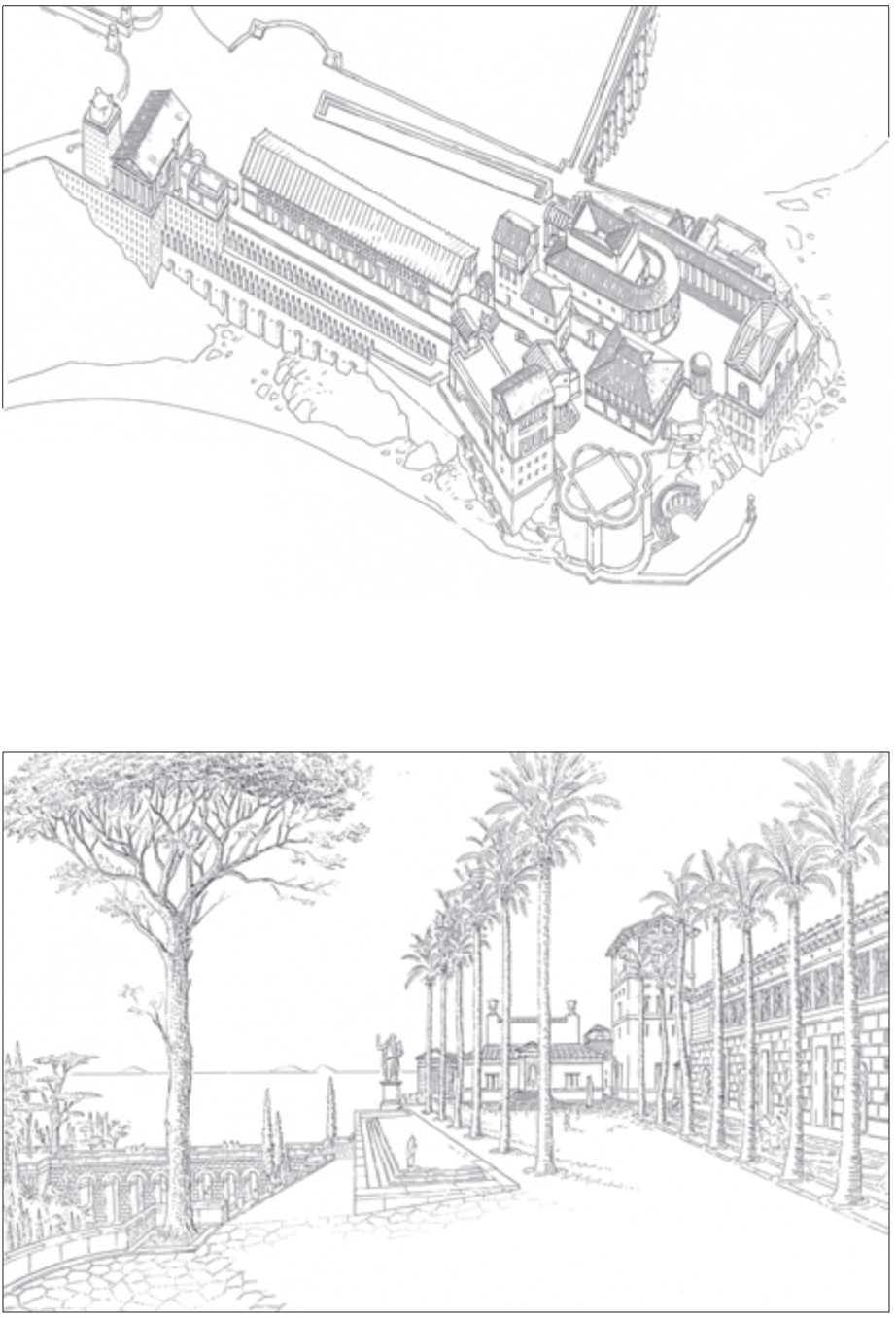
The ambiguity arises from modernism's claim, via the "modern movement," to be the only legitimate embodiment of modernity. In fact, "modernism" and "modernity" are not identical. They are sometimes amalgamated because of consonance, but more often by ideological reasons.

"Tradition" and "modernity," or the "traditional" and the "modern," are not antagonistic notions: traditional (artisan) building techniques using predominantly natural building materials of wood, stone, earth, clay, etc., tend to produce objects for long-term use. Modernist (industrial) building techniques predominantly using synthetic building materials, ferroconcrete, plastics, glass, steel, glues, etc., tend to produce objects for short-term consumption.



VILLA LAURENTUM OF PLINY THE YOUNGER, RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT, L.K., 1981. A number of archaeologists and architects were commissioned by the Institute Francais d' Architecture, at the invitation of Maurice Culot, to submit suggestions for the reconstruction of the Villa Laurentum, thus after years of neglect reinstating imagination as a central force in archaeological work.





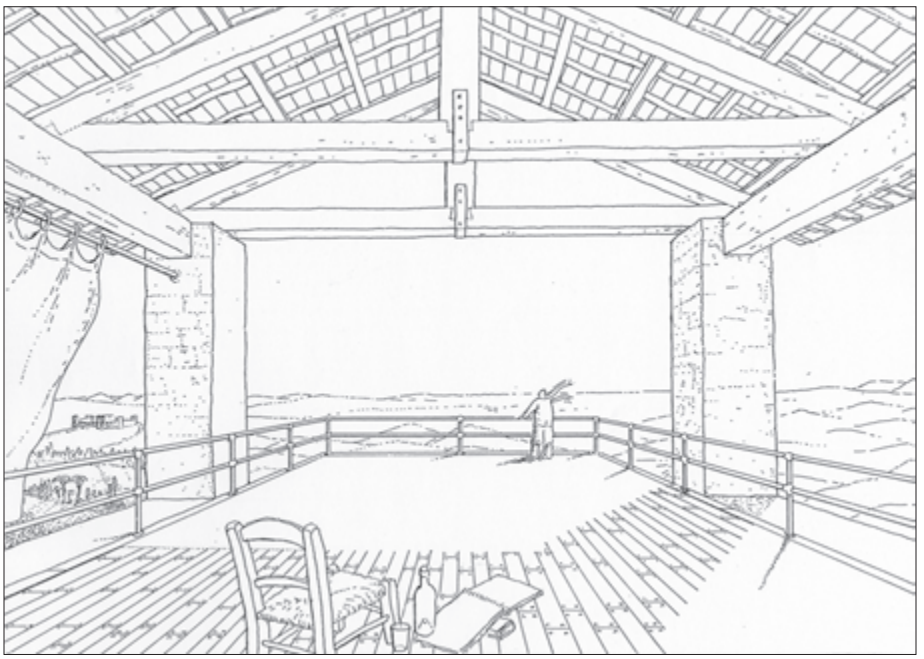
VILLA LAURENTUM OF PLINY THE YOUNGER, RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT, L.K., 1981. Archaeology that does not dare to reconstruct is but a form of necrophilia and fetishism. The cult of ruins is not an achievement and has no cultural merit of any sort. It is, rather, a form of contempt for the ancients. The love of ruins celebrates merely the ruin of imagination.

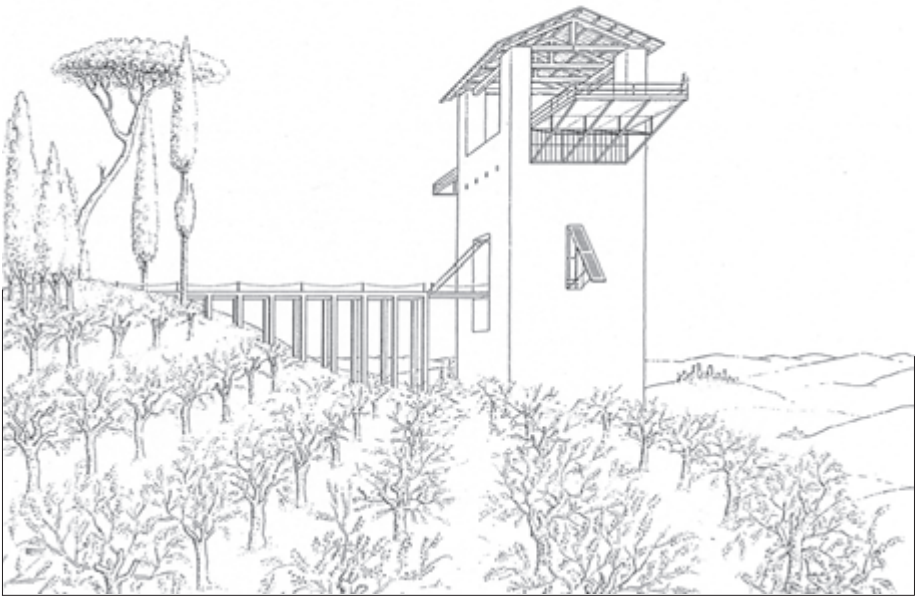
typology • type • composition

A typology is the classification of buildings by type. A type represents the organizational structure of a building in plan and section. A type evolves until it achieves its basic (i.e., its rational and logical) form. The degree of complexity of a traditional type corresponds to the degree of complexity of its functions.

Typological complexity is not a goal in itself but evidence of a functional hierarchy. Simple spaces and volumes constitute the building blocks of all architectural composition however complex the overall result may be. The configuration of external volumes ought to be a logical expression of interior spaces. In any case, the architectural composition should be the coherent and simple realization of a typological organization in plan and in section in a symmetrical or an asymmetrical order. Uniformity or complexity, regularity or irregularity must always be grounded in a typological order. This is a necessary principle in architectural composition in order to avoid all gratuitousness in matters of uniformity or complexity, of the regular and irregular. Without typological rigor, architectural composition degenerates into arbitrary games of volumes and surfaces, into chimera.

A building type lends itself to infinite reproduction. Easy naming and recognition, simple and uncomplicated use are the necessary preconditions for establishing a typological convention.

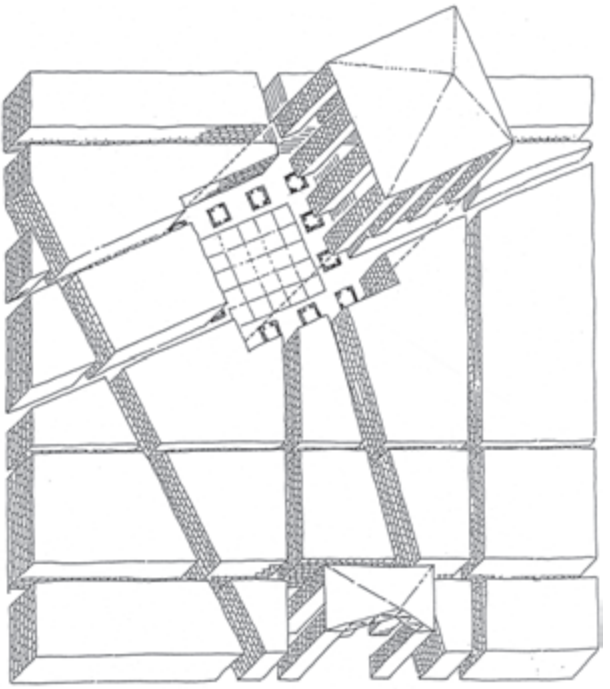




In a fast moving age, the crystallization of new building types seems extraordinarily slow and difficult despite the massive thrust of new types of use. Thus the fact that airport terminals are everywhere in a state of permanent reconstruction demonstrates the fact that shelter and function have not yet found a suitable type. Paul Andreu's Roissy 2 F Terminal and Cesar Pelli's National Airport in Washington, DC, are the first demonstration of airport terminals finally entering a stage of typological maturity. Equally after forty years of unfruitful experimentation, shopping malls are rediscovering the Galleria type, which found widespread application in the nineteenth-century shopping arcade. This type, which evolved from oriental bazaars, had a direct precedent in the Roman basilica.

On the other hand the vast nineteenth-century railway stations have remained practically unchanged in their type, despite the rapid evolution of trains and their performance. In this case, the functional diagram, the structure, and the architecture, clearly found at the outset a typological maturity that was able to effortlessly survive a century of functional adaptations. Typological innovation finds its synthesis in a classical form that is both immediate and enduring.

TOWER HOUSE IN BAGNAIA, TUSCANY, L.K., 1974.
The tower house is surmounted by an artist's studio. The large balconies are both work platforms and sun-breakers for the studio windows.



ROMA INTERROTTA, L.K., 1977.
This new building type is both a public building and a public square. The tower buildings support an immense roof at an imposing height, which forms a covered public square for civic functions such as assembly rooms, cafés, clubs, workshops, conference rooms, etc. It provides engines for urban centrality and marks both the plan and skyline of the city.

invention • innovation • discovery

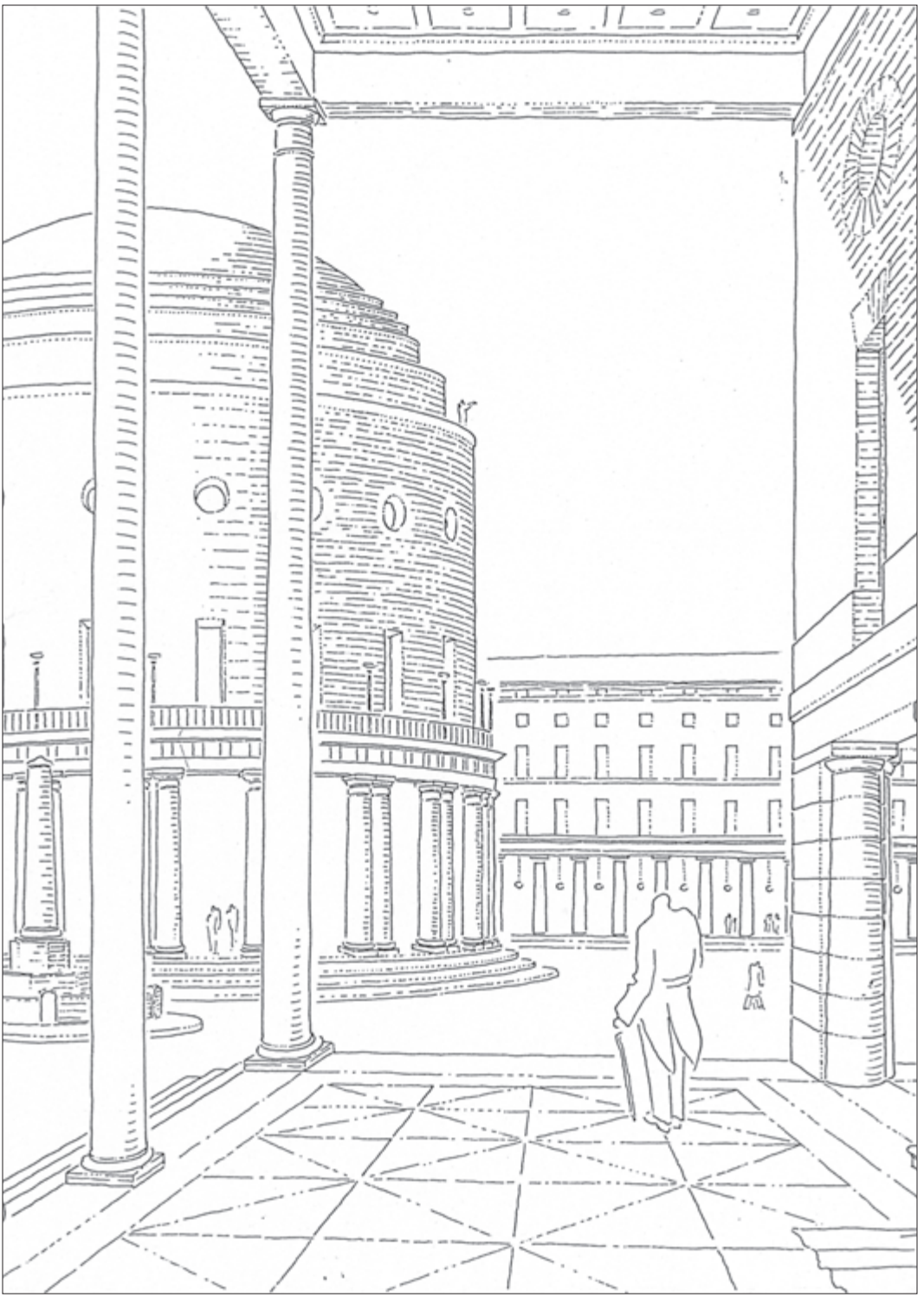
In divergent philosophies the concepts of invention, innovation, and discovery have different meanings and statutes.

In traditional cultures, invention, innovation, and discovery are the means to modernize proven and practical systems of thinking, planning, building, representing, communicating in the arts, philosophy, architecture, language, the sciences, industry, and agriculture. They are the means to an end. They aim to conceive, realize, and conserve a solid, durable, practical, beautiful, humane world.

Fundamental aesthetic and ethical principles are deemed to have universal values that transcend time and place, climate, and civilization. Industrial methods and logic have a subordinate role.

In modernist cultures, invention, innovation, and discovery are transcendental ends. It is claimed that constant changes in socioeconomic and political conditions necessarily question all concepts. There are no longer any universal ethical and aesthetic categories and, hence, traditional values are seen as obstacles to life, liberty, and progress. In these cultures, industrial methods and imperatives dominate every aspect of life – government and politics, economy, and culture, and well beyond their evident practical usefulness and justification.

For traditional cultures, imitation is a way of producing objects that are similar but unique. They are the means to create places of unique character. In modernist cultures, identical copying inevitably results in the production of identical clones of whatever scale. These are identical multiples that have no identity, or have merely a group identity and are thus unable to make true places.



Traditional architecture: vernacular building and classical architecture

Traditional architecture comprises two complementary disciplines: vernacular building, on the one hand, classical or monumental architecture, on the other.

Vernacular: from the Latin *vernaculus*, domestic, indigenous
Classical: form the Latin *classicus*, of the highest class
Definitions from *The Shorter Oxford Dictionary*

The vernacular and the classical articulate distinctions of rank at different levels, between private and public, between individual and collective, between urban fabric and monument, between house and palace, between street and square, etc.

Vernacular building is the artisan culture of construction. It is concerned with domestic and utilitarian buildings and civil engineering works.

Classical or monumental architecture is the artistic culture of vernacular building. It is concerned with the symbolic language of construction, with the decoration of public structures, with buildings, squares, and monumental features in general.

Classical buildings are aggrandizements of vernacular models and means. Their large scale and enrichments reflect their collective status, sustain their visual and symbolic radiance.

REDEVELOPMENT OF SPITALFIELDS MARKET, L.K. with JANUSZ MAÇIAG, 1986.
View from the portico of the Assembly Hall toward the Stock Exchange. The contrasting vernacular and classical vocabularies articulate the specific symbolic status of a building's private or public functions.

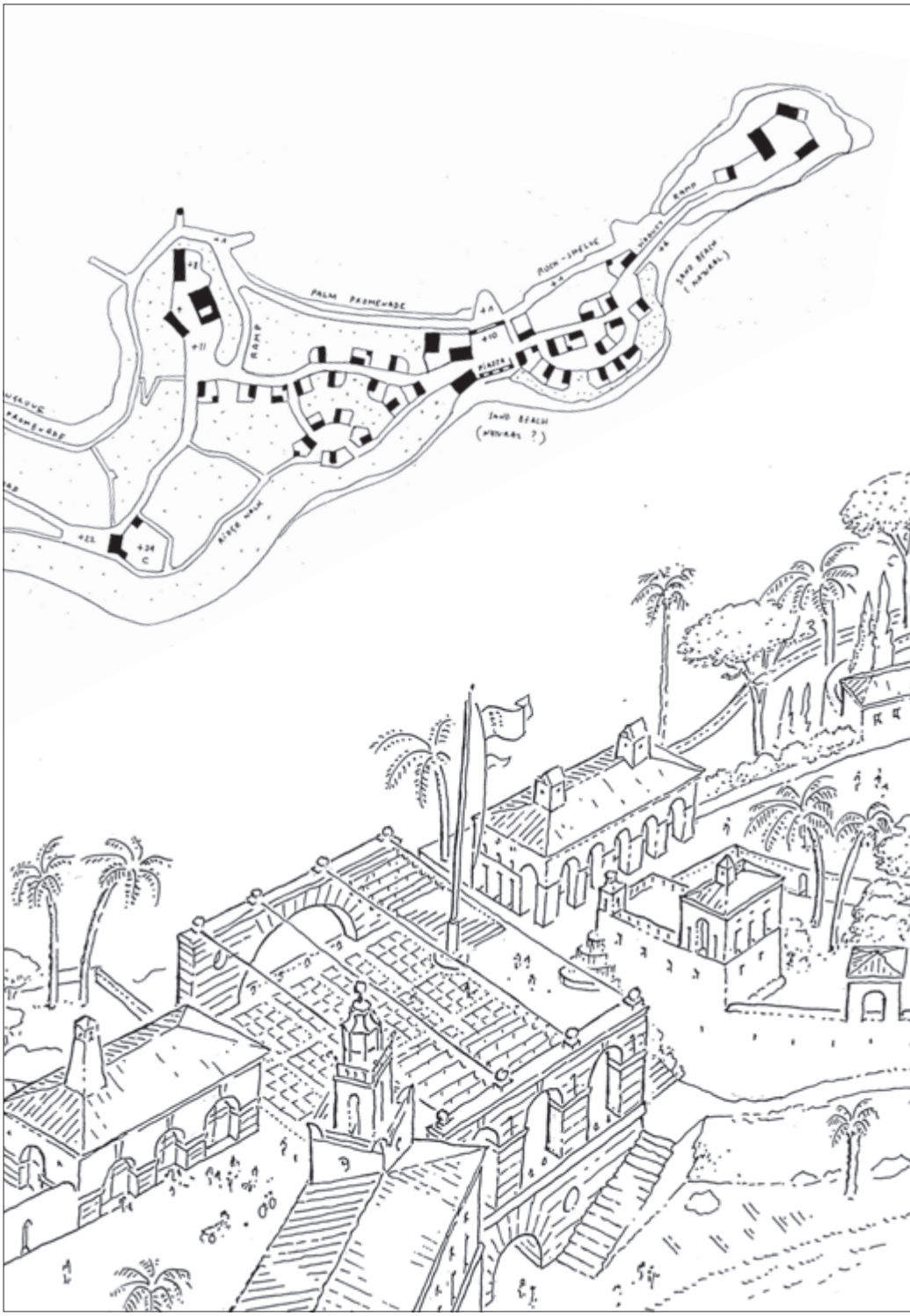
Region and style

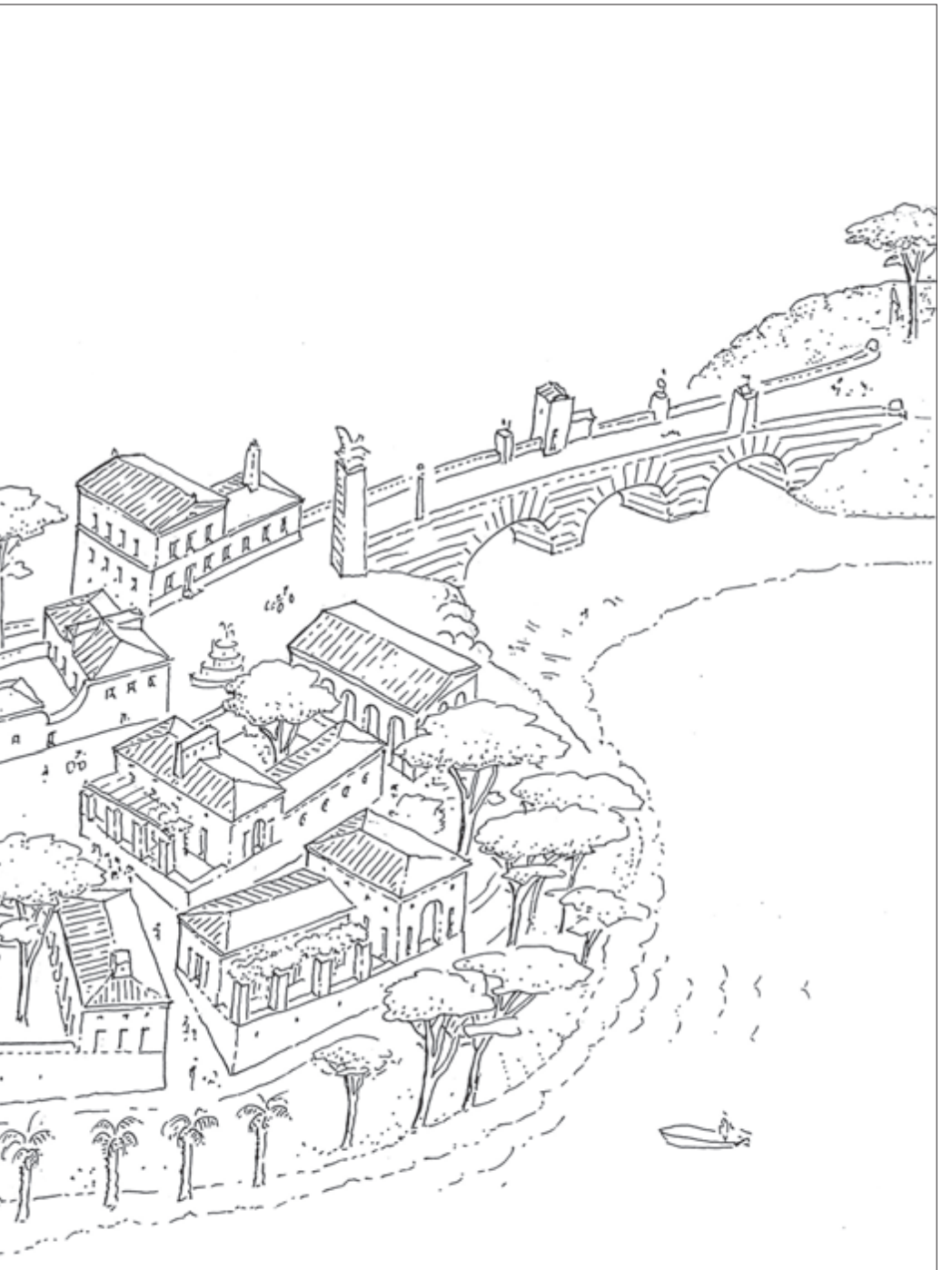
Vernacular building is necessarily shaped by geoclimatic conditions and local materials. A regional style represents the culture of forms and techniques suitable for a region, responding to its climatic, material, and topographic conditions. Its aesthetic and character emerge from the infinitely varied, intelligent repetition of a basic, continuously adapted formal and typological inventory.

Classical architecture develops transregional, universal styles. Even though its elements are anchored in the vernacular of a region (Tuscan, Doric, Ionian . . .) or in the style of a regime, dynasty, or ruler, their elaboration and symbolic codification transcend both place and period and lend themselves to continental or even universal implementation.

The idea of replacing the world's rich panoply of traditional architectures by a single international style is dangerously insane. Like the idea of the mastery of the world by one person, one ideology, one government, one language, one race or culture, it is a child not of reason but of imperial hubris, and yet to design the same style or type of buildings all around the five continents, irrespective of location and climate, is yet to be recognized for the scandal it is. To speak foreign languages is a universally approved quality; however, for an European to practice traditional Chinese architecture in China, or for an Indian architect to design a provençal villa in Provence is yet to be recognized as an uncontested value.

VILLA FOR LORD ROTHSCHILD AT STRONGILO, CORFU, L.K. with LIAM O'CONNOR, 1978. The villa is built on a promontory facing Albania and the rising sun, and is divided into separate pavilions: great hall, dormitorium, belevedere, and services. The various domestic functions are differentiated by differences in scale, the whole remaining true to vernacular vocabulary in its contrasts of the rudimentary and the refined, the open and the enclosed, horizontal and vertical masses and rooms.


PALM PROMENADE
RAMP
SAND BEACH (NATURAL)
SAND BEACH (NATURAL ?)
RIVER WALK



SMALL URBAN CENTER ON ISLAND IN THE CARIBBEAN, L.K. 2005.

CHAPTER III

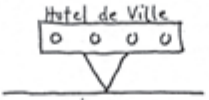
CRITIQUE OF A MODERNIST IDEOLOGY

"Our houses resemble our clients not our designers"

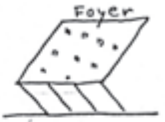
Advertising copy for "Les Demeures Clio" at Trans-en-Provence, France

LIMITS OF POST-MODERNIST "PLURALISM"

Bravo !

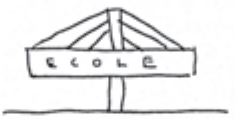


Bien sûr !



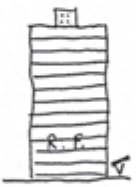
evident !

encore !

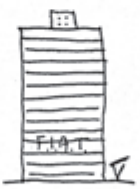


maternellement

sympha !



chouette !



quelle force !

prestigieux !

c'est scandaleux

c'est intolérable !

THE INTOLERANCES OF A PARTISAN PLURALISM

"HOW TO MAKE THE EASY DIFFICULT BY WAY OF THE USELESS"

MODERNISM OR THE ANTICONFORMISM OF THE ESTABLISHMENT

HISTORICISM AND MODERNISM

MODERNISM AND PROGRESS

THE APORIA OF MODERNISM

MODERNISM AND EXPERIMENTALISM

MODERNISM AND FUNCTIONALISM

MODERNISM AND FORMALISM

ZEITGEIST

MODERNISM AND MEMORY

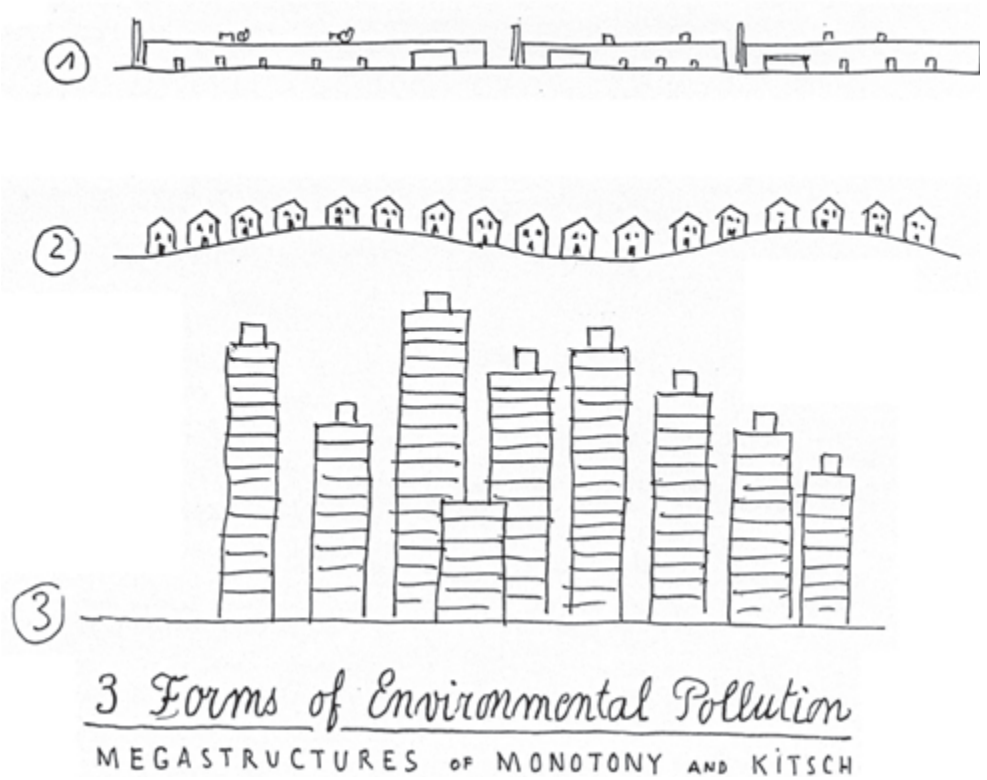
MODERNISM AND CONSERVATION THE CHARTER OF VENICE AND DOCOMOMO

AFTER MODERNISM

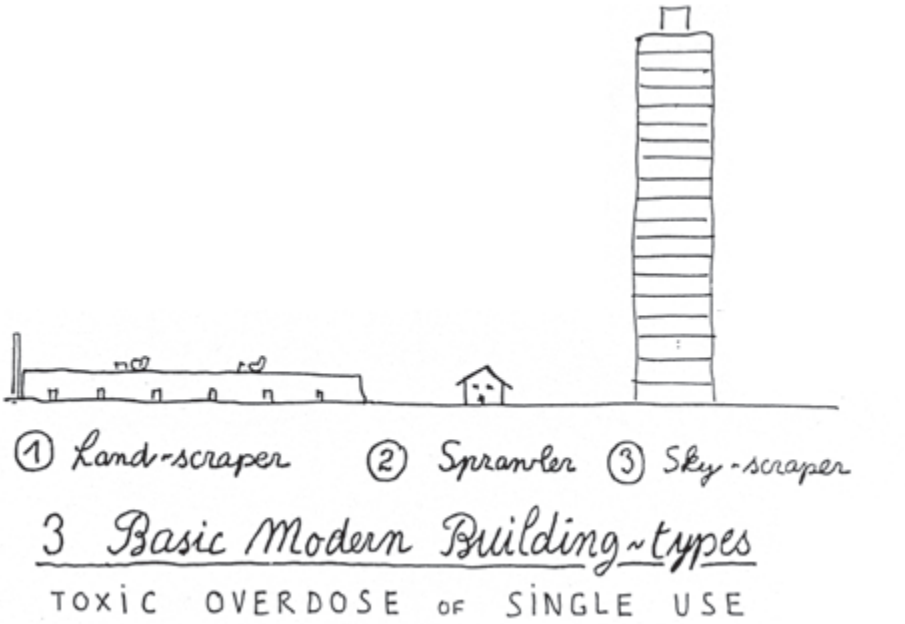
GAINED IN TRANSLATION

"HOW TO MAKE THE EASY DIFFICULT BY WAY OF THE USELESS"

Marcello Piacentini's witticism on a certain type of architectural modernism is as true today as it was sixty years ago. It seems, indeed, to have in many projects become a guiding principle. Thus we find glass and steel palaces in which to work and live in the sun and the snow; air conditioning failures that make buildings unusable; millions of visitors having to enter a national museum through the cellar before reaching the first and main floors; casings, towers, and service pipes blocking the view of a glass palace; a world treasury of books stored in glass towers with the air conditioning on twenty-four hours a day to protect the books from the built-in threat of destruction; large blocks of flats built en masse along the noisiest and most polluted traffic axes. And always, everywhere, an absolute dependence on air-conditioning, the most important single cause of oto-rhino-laryngological traumas.



"CITIES ARE NOT MERE CONCENTRATION OF BUILDING TYPES. THEY ARE NOT THE AUTOMATIC RESULT OF CONCENTRATED BUILDING ACTIVITY. THE ESSENTIAL QUALITY OF A CITY IS NOT SO MUCH DUE TO THE CONTRIBUTION OF DIFFERENT ERAS OR OF TIME BUT, FIRST AND FOREMOST, TO THE GENETIC AND ADAPTIVE CAPACITIES OF THE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH IT IS BASED."



MODERNISM
OR THE ANTICONFORMISM OF THE ESTABLISHMENT

Since its establishment as a doctrine at the beginning of the twentieth century, modernism in architecture has been faithful to its founding principles.

Even though it has functioned for sixty years through the repetition of established models, modernism continues to "mythologize" itself as the only innovative, revolutionary force of architecture. It defines itself as anticonformist despite the fact that it has dominated democracies and totalitarian regimes of both left and right, from Washington, DC, to Moscow, from Cuba to Chile.

Everyone today knows that Mies van der Rohe was prepared to work for Hitler, and Le Corbusier for Petain. In 1942, Alvar Aalto paid a friendly visit to Hitler's sculptor in the German Reich. Terragni worked for Mussolini, and Niemeyer for an impressive number of dictators around the world; yet bigots continue to repeat Herbert Read's tirade: "In the back of every dying civilization sticks a bloody doric column." In this way they attempt to discredit all traditional architecture, and any criticism of modernist works is branded as conformist, historicist, or even reactionary and fascist.

"SPIRIT OF TIME" WINNING AGAINST "SPIRIT OF PLACE"
("cutting-edge" spirit being a child of cosy environment)

But surely such systematic denunciations apply first of all to the denouncers! Modernist buildings generally betray and even contradict their own stated promises and aims, namely the doctrines of functionalism, rationalism, constructivism, economism, and utilitarianism!

Incapable of questioning its own principles – or rather its understanding of rationality, progress, and modernity – modernism has regressed into a mystique. It has become insensitive to the profound changes in society. Paradoxically, modernity is today confronted with a reactionary form of modernism.

Conformism is alive and well. It no longer wears top hats and tweed but mostly baseball caps and black tee shirts.

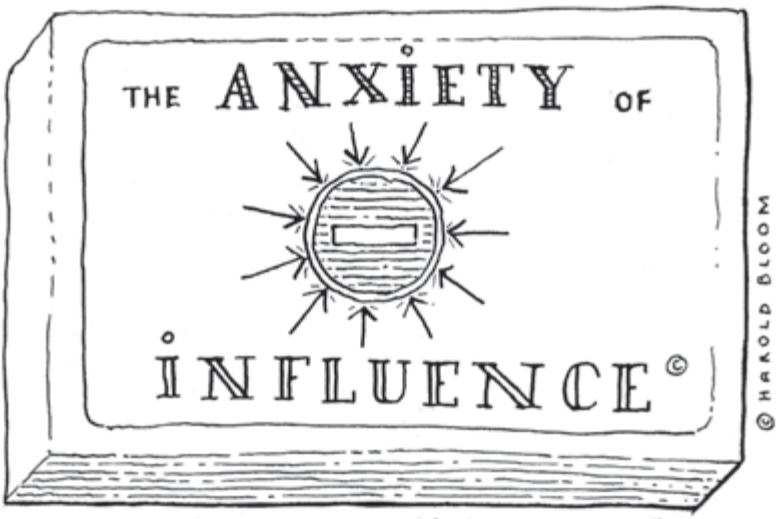
HISTORICISM AND MODERNISM

In fact, profound links exist between modernism and historicism. Historicism is that architectural tendency of the nineteenth century which, for the first time in history, achieved a systematic break in typological and stylistic conventions: *engine sheds in the form of mosques, houses and factories in the form of cathedrals, industrial warehouses behind palace facades, skyscrapers resembling belfries.* This eclecticism has had tragic consequences because its heirs do not merely reject the abuses of architecture but the very architecture that has been abused.

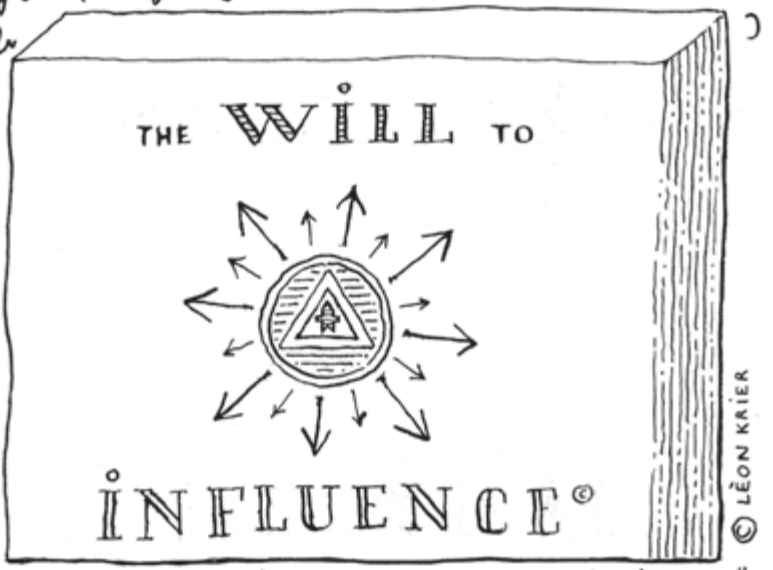
Modernism may well denounce all forms of historicism, but when it conceives of churches that resemble warehouses, palaces of culture that imitate oil refineries or train wrecks, and houses that look like ships, it practices historicism's own confusion of categories, changing the images but not the tendency. Once it had exhausted the vocabulary and repertory of traditional architecture, the ideology began colonizing other fields with the same voracity, usurping at first the formal registers of industrial and naval architecture, in a later phase those of machines and tools, and now the ones of exploded accident remnants or eroded mineral formations.

Being thus founded, paradoxically, upon the rejection of its own origins, modernist ideology establishes its will for absolute domination by "historicizing" all forms of traditional architecture and technology. Having been declared "historic" and "historicizing" – and hence dated and *dépassé* – the practice of traditional architecture would as a next step be denounced as antimodern, anachronistic, and invalid. The accusation of historicism has consequently become the equivalent of blacklisting. In this way modernism has freed itself from family relationships that had become intolerable.

THE HIDDEN COROLLARY
of mental empires



"I am my only source of inspiration"... "I am only influenced by myself".... "God has sent me to"... "I am unlike any other"... "I am not influenced by anyone, only by events".... "I am the first"... "I am your Sal
I am
"The



"Those who are not for me are against me".
"I am the beginning and the End of... Philosophy, science, architecture, mathematics, cooking, grammar"
LK 06

MODERNISM AND PROGRESS

The scientific and technical revolution succeeds because its assertions are both obvious and useful. Modernism in art and architecture seeks to impose itself upon the public and the authorities not by the superiority of its propositions but by the violence of its promises. Its technology was never revolutionary; elements such as flat roofs, pilotis, curtain walls, and open plan had all been discovered long before. It was revolutionary only in its massive, exclusive, and aggressive application of these elements and its declaration of war on all traditional cultures.

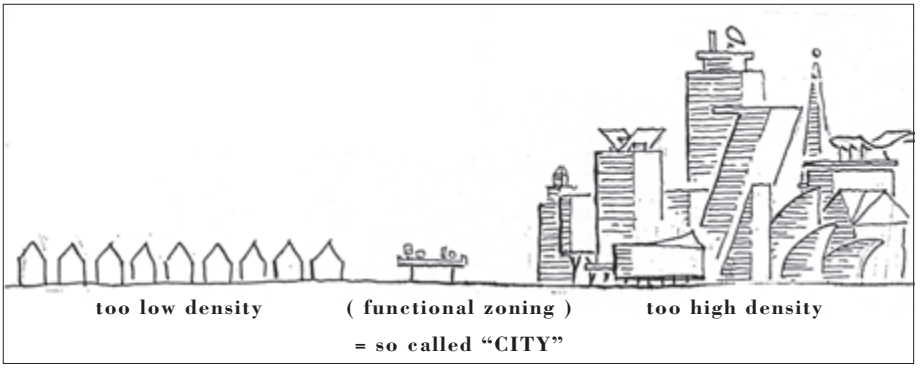
The philosophical error of modernism lies not so much in the tenets of its doctrine but in the presentation of modernism as new paradigm, as exclusive principle, as panacea that must invalidate and supplant by force, if necessary, all traditional architecture and urbanism. It seems to me that standardization, prefabrication, open plan, curtain walls, horizontal windows, roof terraces, laminated steel, glass walls, reinforced concrete, and even cloned architectural elements are useful within certain limits; they are not antitraditional. But when raised to the level of metaphysical absolutes and exclusive dogma, the result is an impoverishment of cities and societies.

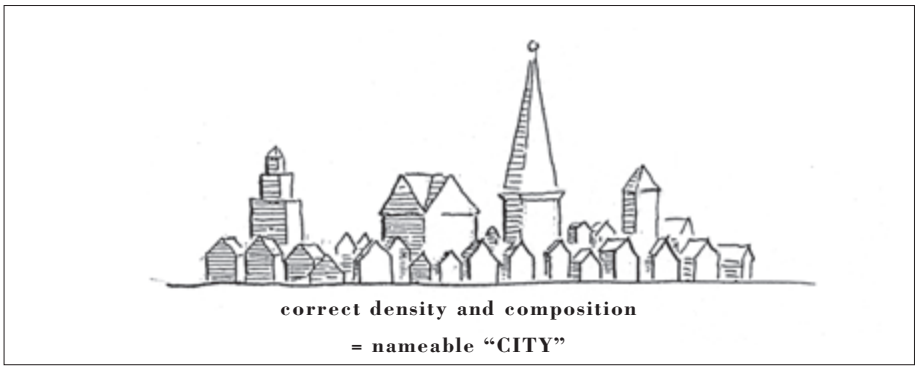
There is no contradiction between wanting to live in a traditional city and driving a fast car. A certain fashionable avant-gardism reproaches the public for refusing modernism and for wanting "to find refuge in a reassuring past." And yet this same public accepts the "reassuring comforts of modern life." They admire scientific advances and welcome new "technologies." The public demonstrates practical intelligence in both its desires and its choices; it generally prefers sloping roofs on houses but does not demand car roofs to be thatched.

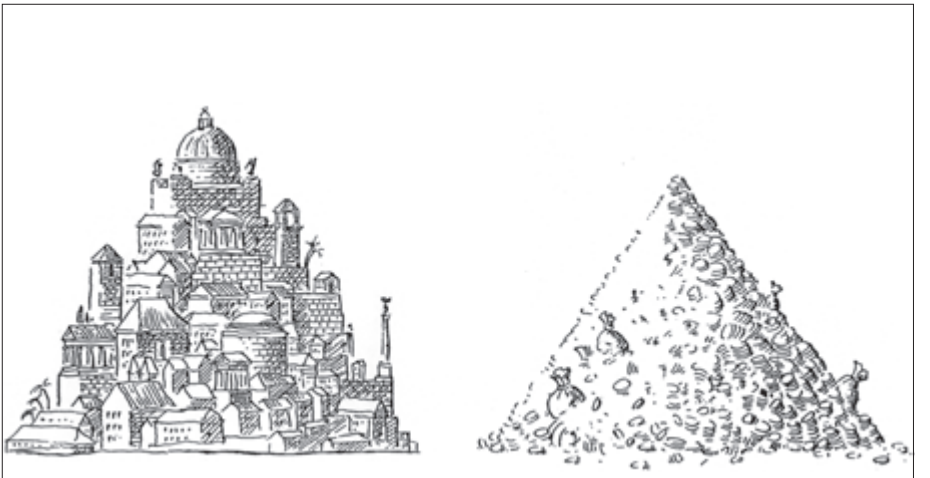
Tradition and progress are not antinomical notions. Although household machinery has undergone radical changes as a result of the industrial scientific revolution, the idea and ideal of the Cuban, Basque, Provençal, Japanese, Virginian, or Andalusian house as the hearth of the family, the traditional notions of home and domestic comforts, have not been rendered obsolete by discoveries at the level of either microcosm or macrocosm. Moreover, in the collective mind the idea of mass housing does simply not constitute a viable replacement for these ideals; on the contrary, it represents a system from which escape is imperative. What is true for domestic ideals also holds true for civic architecture and for the natural and urban environments.

THE APORIA OF MODERNISM

Does modernism have a tradition? Some theorists would have us believe that it has. But aren't modernism and tradition contradictory terms? Architecture that claims to be exclusively of its age implicitly contains the germ of obsolescence; it has its sell-by date engraved on its front. Architects often explain the unpopularity of their works by the shock of novelty. But after half a century, modernism is no longer new and, what is more, novelty is generally a spur to purchase. Modernist buildings encounter a fundamental existential difficulty: the time taken by the public to become familiar with them generally exceeds their lifespan. The wave of demolitions of modernist buildings that is now well under way has engendered few regrets. Citizens' associations are only ever formed for the safeguard of traditional buildings. The inferiority of nontraditional techniques, the lack of a rational theory that could be handed down and shared – all these internal and external difficulties are against the establishment of a modernist tradition on a par with classical-vernacular traditions. Moreover, there is no coherent neo-modernist thinking that, like Le Corbusier's, is capable of building an authoritative body of theory offering the necessary synthesis of urban planning and ecology on the one hand, and architecture and building on the other.







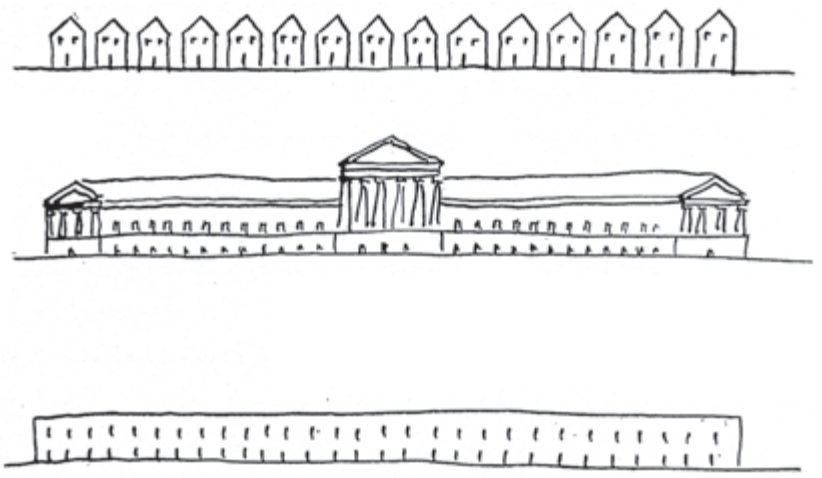
TWO FORMS OF ACCUMULATION

Modernism has not developed a language; it does not distinguish simple building from architecture as art; it lacks a vocabulary, grammar, and syntax allowing to differentiate civic, domestic, business, and industrial buildings. There is no coherent theory of characters, symbols, types, signs, of form or content, of scale or proportions.

The void left behind by the disintegration of modernist dogma is filled by personal theories consisting of "poetic" whimsy, pretentious borrowed jargon, and nostalgic revivals of the Dadaists, Merz, Proun. Such metatheories do not stand up to rational analysis, dialogue, and, consequently, eventual amendments. In any case, they do not constitute a suitable instrument for the reform of urban regulations, of architectural education, or of the various building crafts. They have but little contribution to make to the improvement of cities and landscape. Neo-modernist theories represent, in general, a relapse into transcendental speculation and unjustifiable experimentalism. Instead of providing practical solutions to the pressing problems of the cities, they merely add to the general confusion.

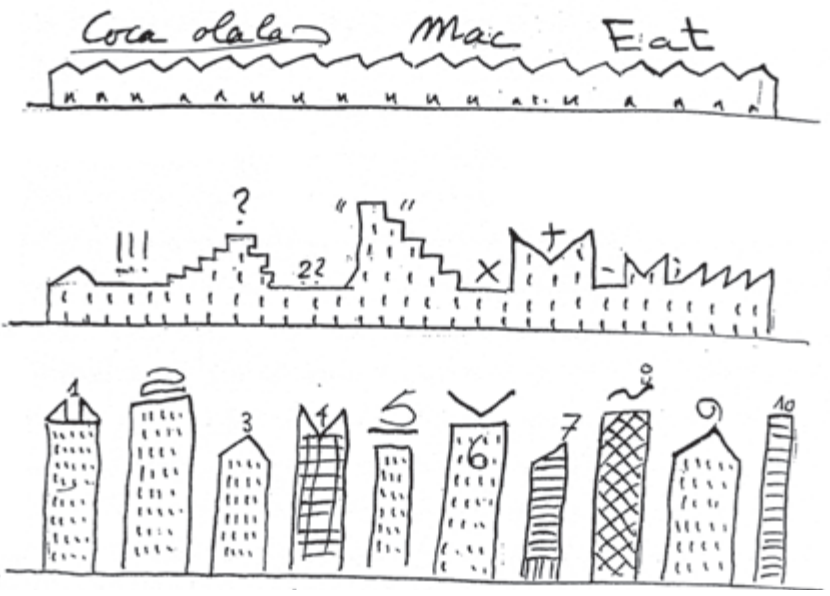
MODERNISM AND EXPERIMENTALISM

Just like artists, experimental scientists generally make discoveries not by systematic thought but by leaps of intuition. Yet it is only through logical deduction and proof that intuitions can become scientific knowledge and enter the realm of applied science. Medical patients are not injected with experimental substances; passengers are not flown in x-planes; and yet modernist architects claim the right to house millions of citizens in experimental buildings and cities.



THEME with 6 SURFACE - VARIATIONS

MONOFUNCTIONAL ZONING AND PROGRAMMING results FATALLY IN → MEGASTRUCTURES CONSTRUCTIONAL-STYLISTIC



MODERNISM AND FUNCTIONALISM

Modernism erroneously lays claim to unique capacities for evolution, transformation, and growth. These capacities are regularly opposed with traditional architecture's supposed rigidity, inflexibility, and structural incapacity of adopting to modern-day demands. Let us then examine the concepts of growth, evolution, transformation, adaptability, and flexibility. Growth is an expression of vitality; its value resides in having an aim and a limit.

Organic growth stops at maturity, short of which it leads to monstrosity. Maturity corresponds to the full capacity of becoming and being. The desire for progress and unlimited growth, however, corresponds to a negation of adulthood, to a childish dream of never-ending adolescence. The obsession with growth at all costs misunderstands not only the basic principle of all life; as a stock response it provokes also rabid forms of conservatism.

In fact, few people are conscious of the transformations that human settlements undergo through the ages, be they a peaceful village or a seething metropolis. To get an idea, let us imagine that a photographic lens placed on a hill opposite an ancient city has taken one photograph a week at midday in exactly the same light conditions since the city's foundation. Projecting these images at a rate of eighteen per second, we can see on the screen, in less than an hour, a thousand years of morphological history; what is revealed is the profound nature, not of a finished object, but of an organic body that moves, shudders, expands slowly or suddenly shrinks, then explodes, or sleeps without ever really resting.

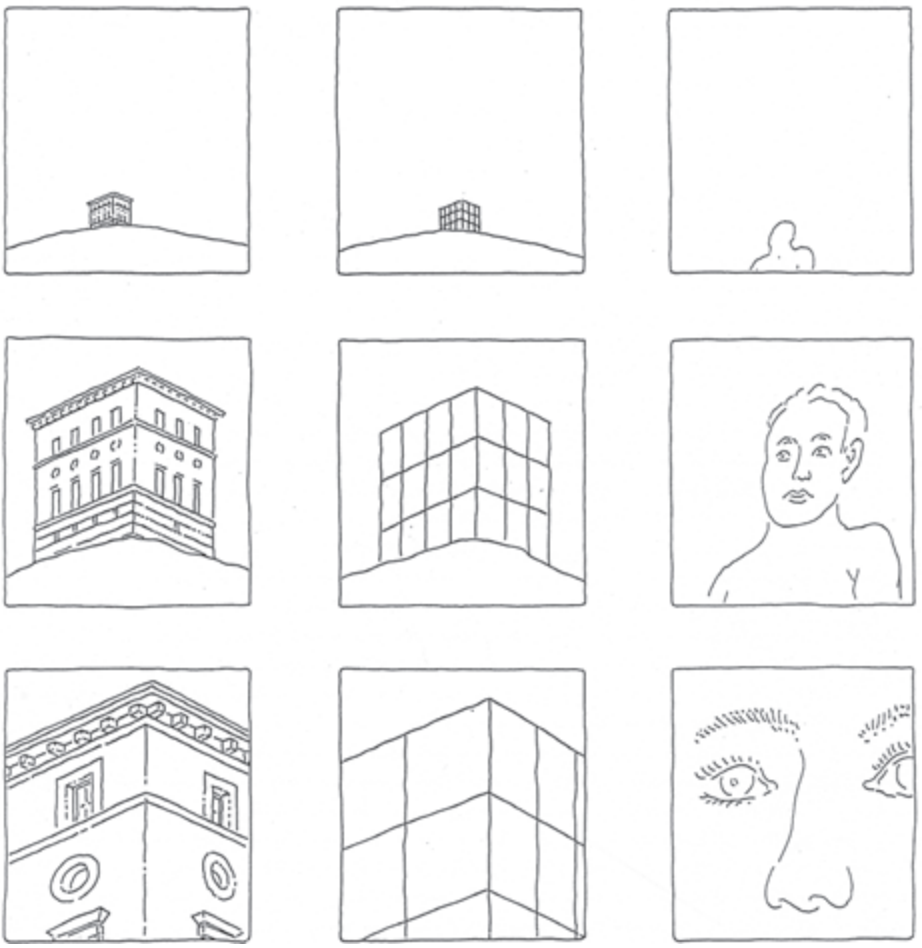
The "serene" prewar photographs of children and old people stuck like effigies in the middle of the road give a false impression of fixity in a reality that has never stood still, that is constantly submitted to the effects of an infinity of wills and instruments. The dynamism and flexibility claimed by modernism is not characteristic of our age alone, but a *sine qua non* condition of all life.

The theory advocated by Constructivists, by Archigram, and by high-tech movements that cities and buildings should be permanent building sites, ignores the simple fact that the central aim of a building site must be to finish the building as quickly as possible so that life can go on there without hindrance. Similarly in nature, the evolution and transformation of the species are neither permanent nor gradual conditions. The study of fossils leads us to believe that the evolution

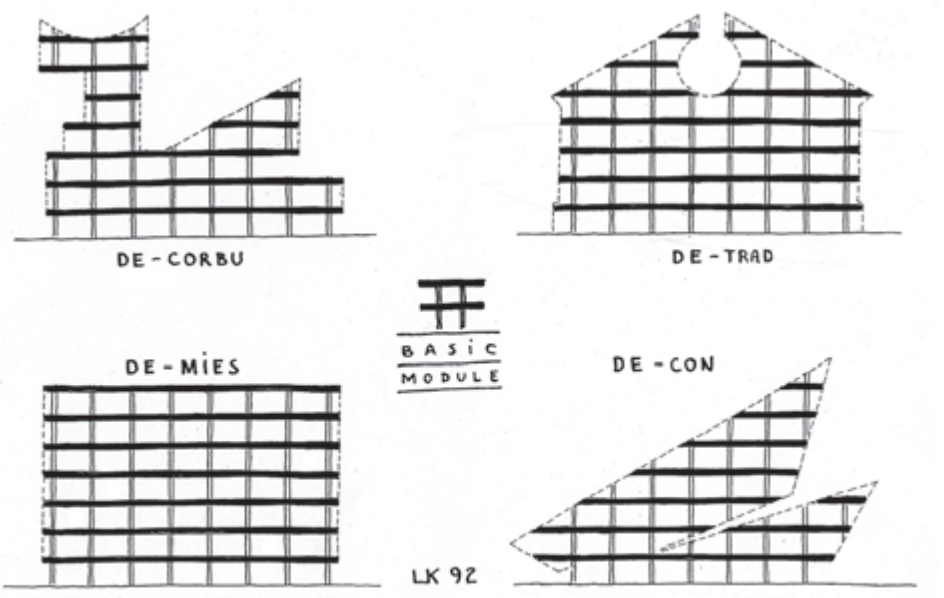
"Formalistic uniformity and arbitrary formalism are symmetrical phenomena. They are the fatal result of mono-functional zoning. 'Palaces for the people' and 'ghettos for the privileged' are the extremes of programmed confusion. True formal variety is the natural, logical expression of functional variety."

of species occurs by "radiations", i.e., by irruptions that lead to the production of new species. These genetic revolutions are followed by extremely long periods of species stability, in other words, of tireless reproductions according to type. The idea of permanent revolution that permeates the myths of unlimited progress and growth is contradicted by the organizing principles of nature itself.

The adaptability of traditional buildings and spaces is not hampered by their structural robustness. The rigidity of a bottle's form does not affect the fluidity of the liquid it contains. Typological and structural stability, and functional adaptability, are not antagonistic concepts; the principle of adaptable functionality is not a monopoly of modernism.



RELATIVE DISTANCES AND DEGREES OF INFORMATION. DRAWING INSPIRED BY A PAGE from the book Chaos *by James Gleick (London 1988). Contrary to the use a number of contemporary artists would like to make of it, chaos theory represents a mathematization, i.e., a rational explanation and formulation of phenomena that may superficially appear to be chaotic.*



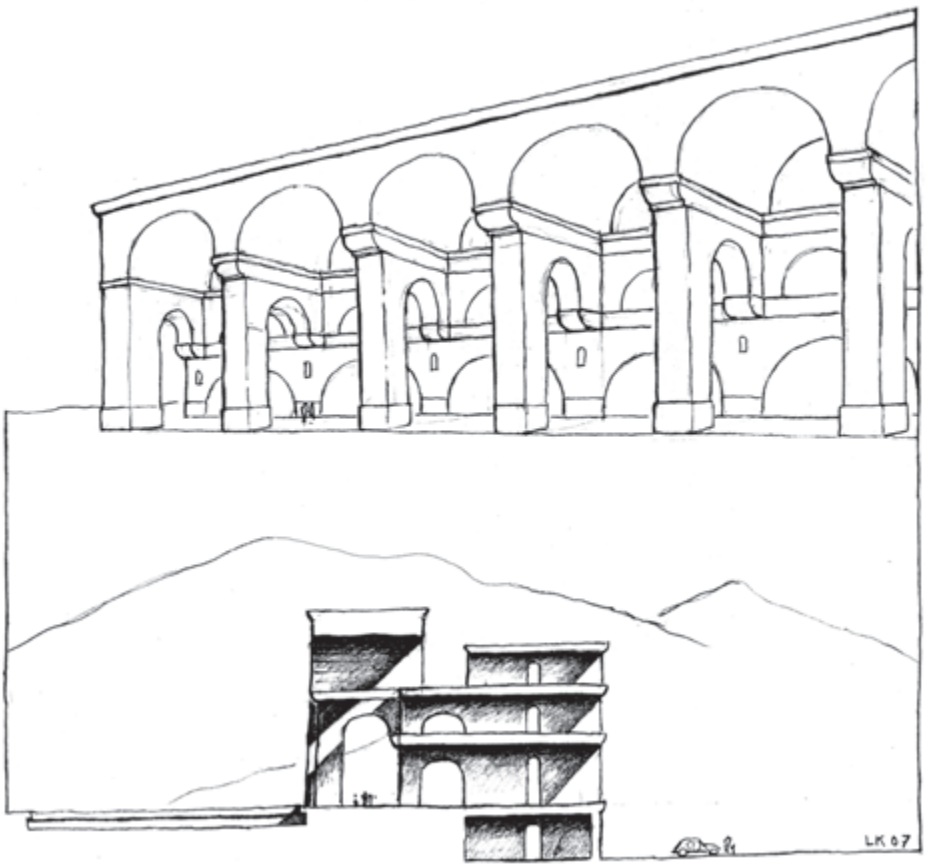
MODERNISM AND FORMALISM

The prevalence of standards, series, norms, identical repetition, uniformity, and absolute precision has influenced all levels of our culture well beyond industrial necessity. It has led to a formalism of uniformity that inevitably calls for its opposite, a formalism of the arbitrary.

The formalistic and arbitrary uniformity of a Mies van der Rohe on the one hand, and the arbitrary formalism of a Scharoun, or a Finsterlin on the other, constitute paradigms of contemporary modernist revivals.

Some proclaim uniformity as the necessary expression of mass society, collectivism, and standardized needs; others suggest the arbitrary as a justified revolt against the same phenomena. The resulting architectural traumas perpetuate the crisis of modern architecture without any objective necessity.

The fallacies on which these theories are based remain impervious to logical argument, to criticism, and therefore to serious reform. If you do not understand modernist products you have only yourself to blame: in other words, if you don't like it, it's your own fault. The fact that such speculations have become paradigms of public architecture and art policies is a disaster: we are in the thrall of the absurd.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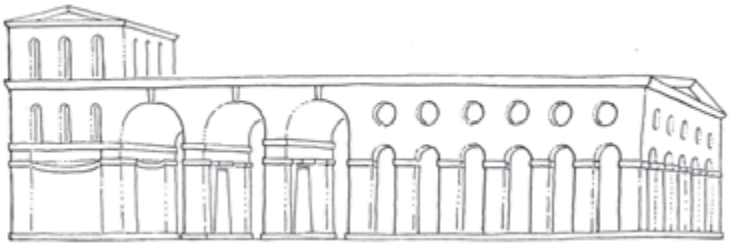


ZEITGEIST

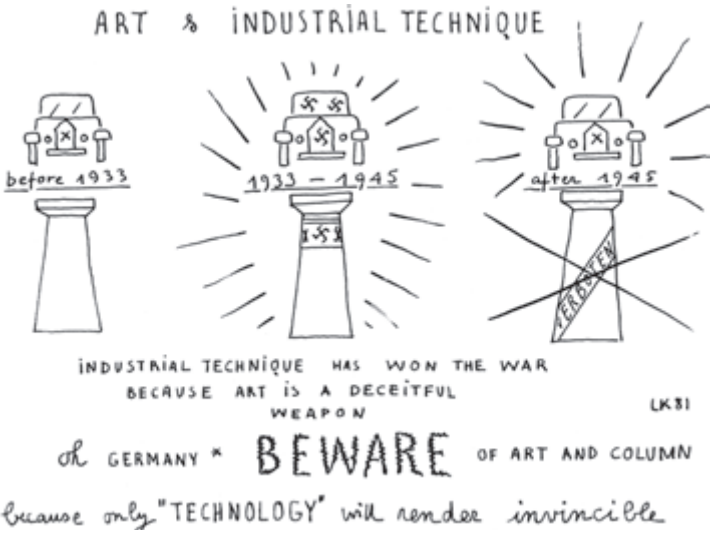
Another characteristic trait of modernist theory is the dictum that one must "be of one's time," that there is no choice in the matter, that the spirit of the time must have a determining influence on all architecture and art.

It is true that to a certain extent all architecture leaves a mark on its age but does this mean that, conversely, the age must necessarily leave its mark on all architecture? This is the stated belief of modernism. In a revolutionary and bloody age, should architecture be as a consequence aggressive and deadly?

A knowledgeable mind can distinguish not only styles and eras but identify, within a few years and a few miles, the moment and place of origin of a building. Even the most talented pastiche will not succeed in misleading the connoisseur.

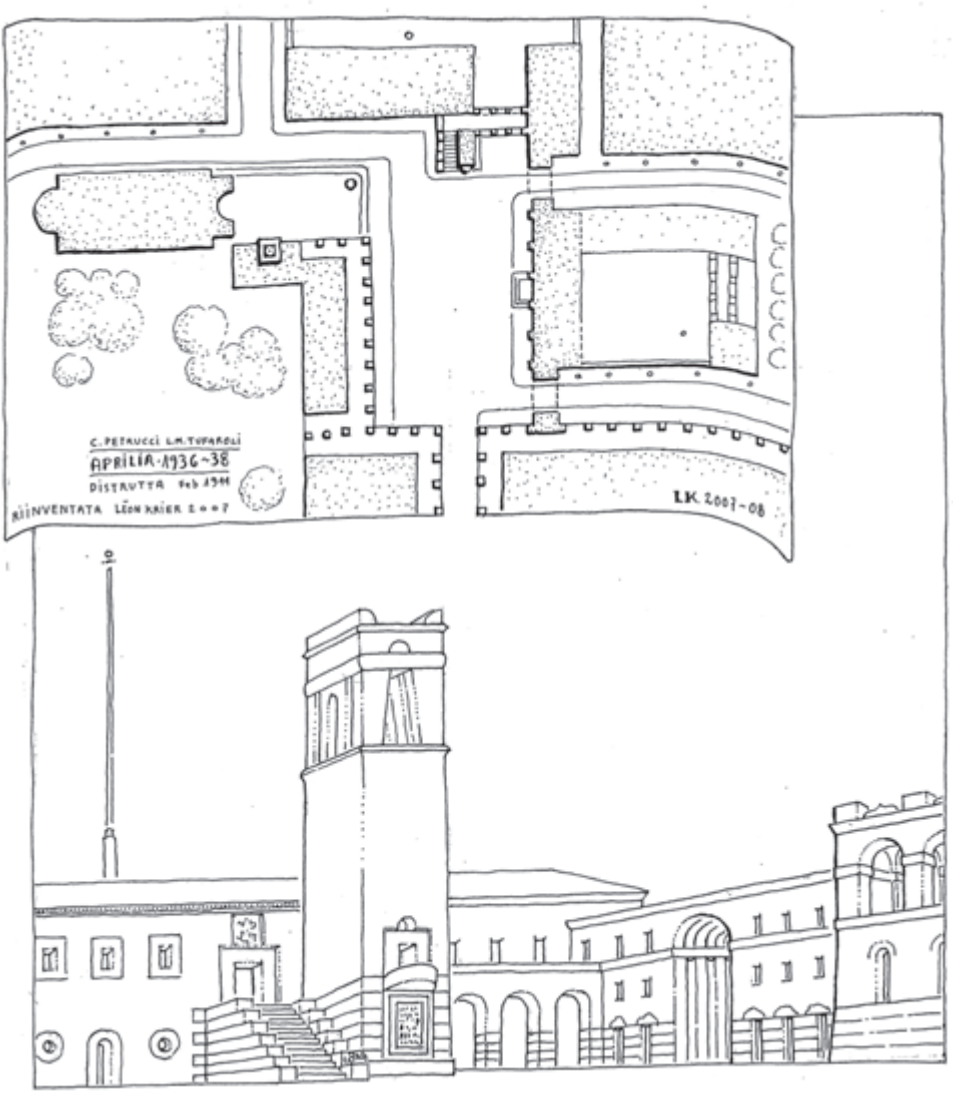
It is impossible not to express to a certain extent the spirit of age – that is what the term "Zeitgeist" means. "Zeitgeist" is as unavoidable as the color of the eyes in a face; it does not present any guarantee of quality. It is not the concern of the artist or of the craftsman since they are aiming for quality beyond their own age and are therefore using ideas, techniques, and materials that will best resist the ravages of time, accidents, and changes in taste. Authentic architecture is not the incarnation of the spirit of the age but of the spirit, full stop.

We are told that our works should express the spirit of our age, but the best works of the past have always proved the contrary. To become mythical, to transmit a perennial message and value, our work has to transcend the particularities of its age of creation.



THE ROOF GARDEN, THE HORIZONTAL WINDOW, THE FREE PLAN, THE LIBERATED GROUND FLOOR, LITERAL AND PHENOMENAL TRANSPARENCY, THE STREAMLINED FORMS, AND THE DOUBLE HEIGHT SPACES ARE NOT THE MONOPOLY OF MODERNISM.

IF THEIR FASCINATION HAS UNIVERSAL VALIDITY, IT CAN WITH GAIN BE TRANSLATED INTO TRADITIONAL REGIONAL IDIOMS – DISPROVING THE WIDESPREAD BELIEF THAT SYNTHETIC MATERIALS WERE THE UNIQUE MEANS FOR THEIR REALIZATION.



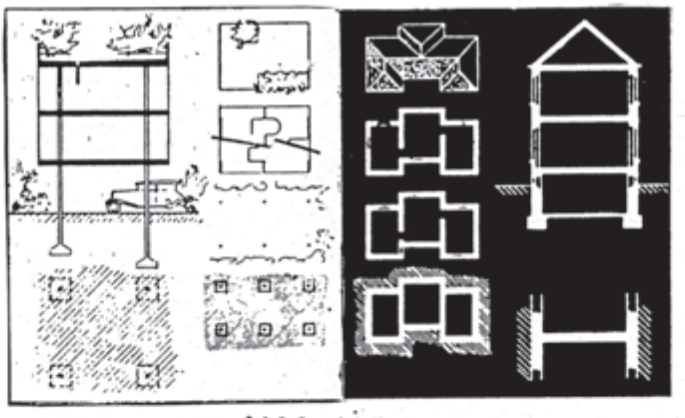
MODERNISM AND MEMORY

Viewed from a certain distance and under good light, even an ugly city can look like the promised land. We also know that the atomic mushroom which arose over Hiroshima was a revelation of immense beauty for American bomber pilots. So by taking an appropriate distance, a cruel spectacle can be appreciated independent of its moral implications. In plays and films we even experience aesthetic pleasure in observing human suffering.

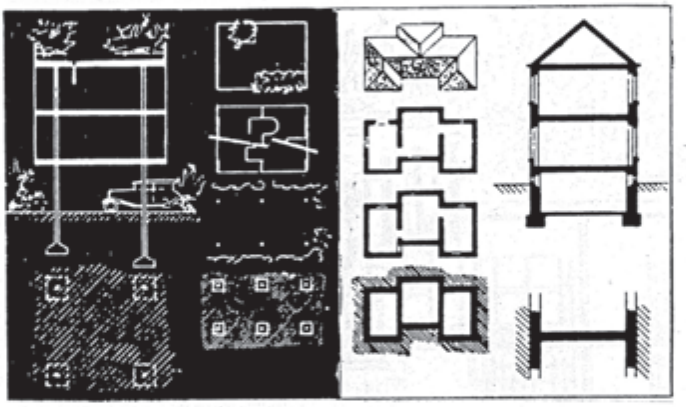
In literature, distance, and detachment allow us to appreciate tragedy, in architecture no valid aesthetic experience can exist without proximity, without the closeness to the masses and the details, without our experiencing the constructed spaces from within. And it is the intimacy of the inhabitant with his home, of the citizen with the city, which has to exclude all dominance of the tragic and the catastrophic from architecture. While this may appear self-evident, there exists today a tendency in design that confuses literature with architecture; a trend that, through an unbalancing and alienating plastic violence, wants to express the tragedy of our times through modern architecture. For its supporters, the memories of unprecedented crime must impregnate all architectural design, and as a consequence of the Shoah, architecture must be in mourning. In my opinion, this attitude is understandable but cannot be sustained because it cannot be generalized. If the proposition were true, it would not only upset architecture but it would have to deconstruct all artistic and technical culture, buildings, furniture, tools, industrial and healthcare structures, road systems, vehicles, and landscapes.

We are dealing with an absurd thesis that confuses the objective and the subjective, the roles of culture and morality, or more simply memory and remembrance, that mixes up mind and sentiment, that amalgamates conscience and emotion.

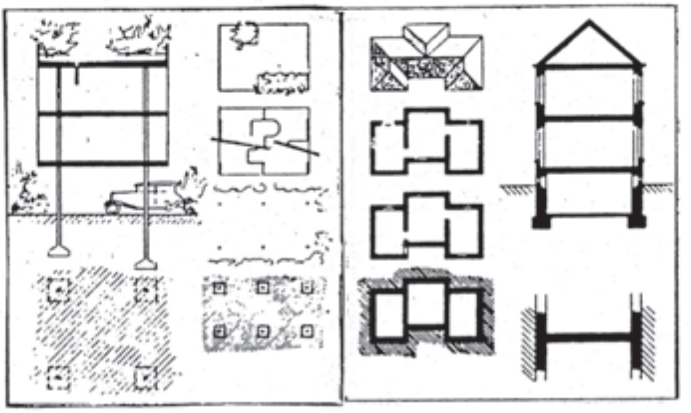
It fails consequently to grasp the diverging means of literature and architecture. It confuses the roles of the reader-spectator and the actor-inhabitant. We cannot inhabit tragedy without being overwhelmed by pain, and we cannot be passive witnesses of architecture that aggresses and horrifies us. For architectural design, memory is neither moral precept nor obligation; it is not an archive of deadly testimony; it is on the contrary an instrument of knowledge and know-how; it represents an inexhaustible inventory of practical and aesthetic solutions that respond to the recurring problems of building places; it is the treasure house of the art of building.



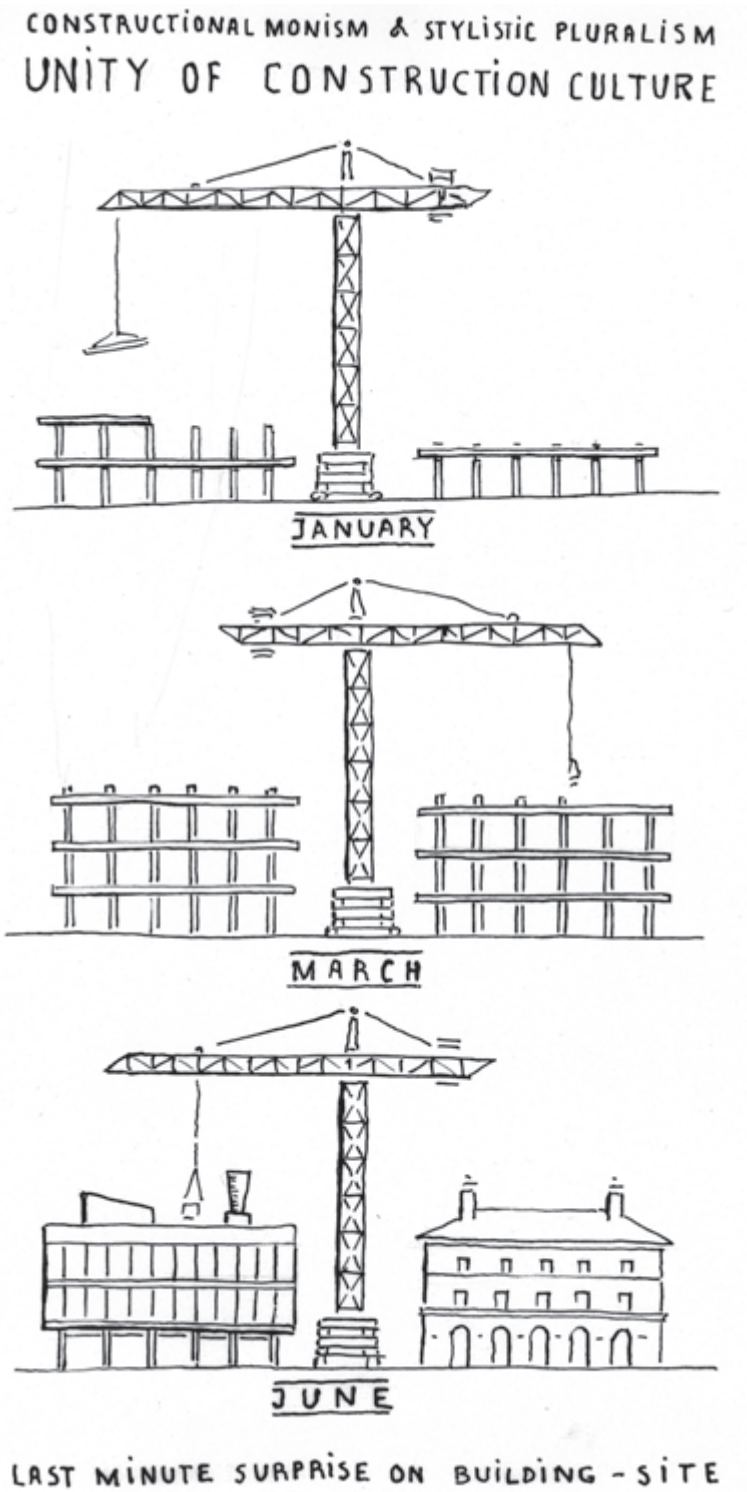
LE CORBUSIER
5 POINTS OF A NEW ARCHITECTURE
AGAINST TRADITIONAL BUILDING



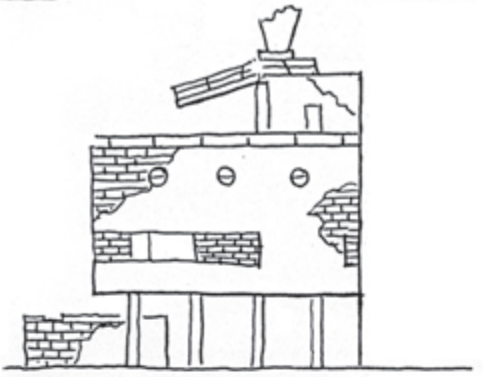
LEON KRIER
5 POINTS OF TRADITIONAL BUILDING



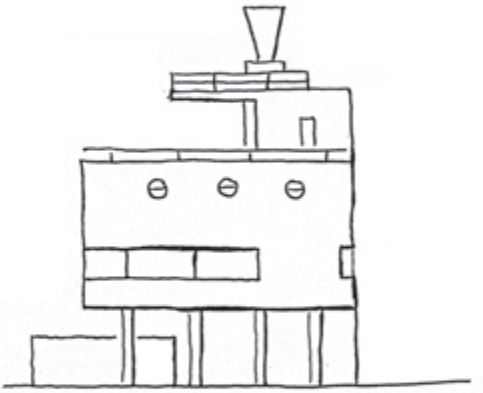
40 POINTS OF PRESENT BUILDING


CONSTRUCTIONAL MONISM & STYLISTIC PLURALISM
UNITY OF CONSTRUCTION CULTURE
JANUARY
MARCH
JUNE
LAST MINUTE SURPRISE ON BUILDING-SITE

Conservative versus Creative Restauration



Derelict Modernist Masterpiece



Conservative Restauration (Nostalgic)

Creative (forward looking) Restauration

MODERNISM AND CONSERVATION
THE CHARTER OF VENICE AND DOCOMOMO

The value of ancient monuments does not reside in their material age but in the quality of the ideas that they embody. An identical reconstruction with the same type and quality of materials, forms, and techniques that were used in the original has more value than an original in ruins. As Joachim Fest has said, the originality of a building does not lie in the materials used but in the originality of its design. It is therefore eminently reparable and can be reconstructed without losing its unique character. Unlike a painting by one irreplaceable artist, a building is not usually a totally personal creation. The cult and fetishization of ruins do no favors to either ourselves or the ancients. What moves us in an ancient monument is its constant modernity, its capacity to speak to us and move us despite its age, its power to transcend its material antiquity. The originators were not builders of ruins.

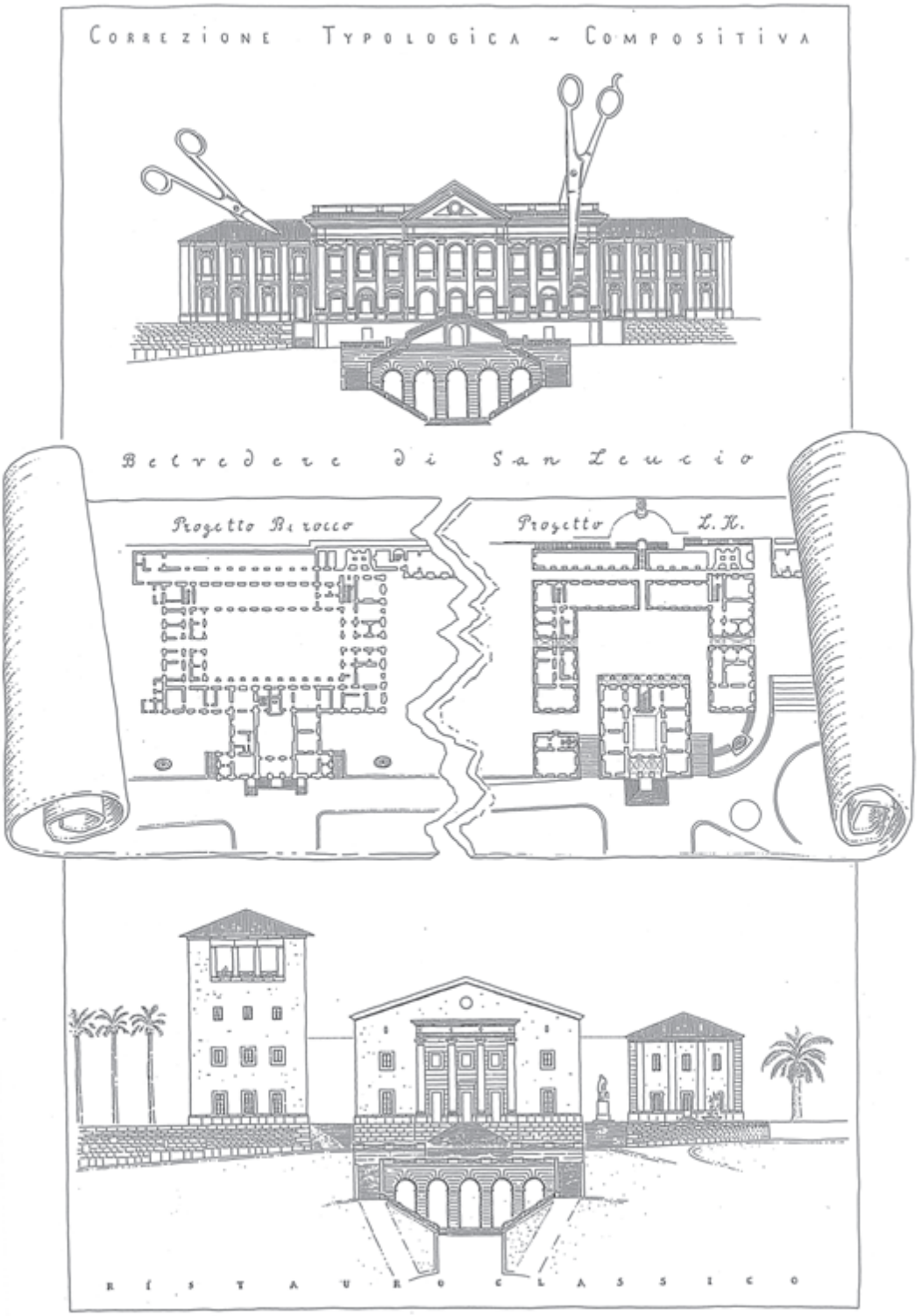
The Charter of Venice was created to give a coherent, contemporary basis for the conservation and restoration of ancient monuments. It was formulated during the Second International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Buildings in Venice in 1964 and was adopted by the International Council for Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in 1965.

For the conservation and restoration of monuments and sites it is what the 1931 Athens Charter was for urban planning, viz a modernist manifesto. It has so successfully changed attitudes that its principles have become second nature for architects and other specialists. Indeed, they generally practice the principles without having read the charter.

After listing the advantages of conservation and restoration of ancient monuments for the greater good of the human race the Charter of Venice, from Article 9 onward, proves to be an instrument for the conservation of ruins and fragments, rather than of masterpieces in their organic and organizational coherence.

Article 9: "The process of restoration is a highly specialized operation. [. . .] It must stop at the point where conjecture begins, and in this case moreover any extra work which is indispensable must be distinct from the architectural composition and must bear a contemporary stamp."

Restoration is an inevitable process in any maintenance operation. It is impossible to carry out any valid restoration without some hypothesis or vision of the whole of the project since the originality of a work is independent of the age of its building materials. But the Charter of Venice stakes everything on the irreplace-


Correzione Typologica ~ Compositiva
Belvedere di San Leucio
Progetto Barocco
Progetto L.R.
RESTAURO CLASSICO

ability of material relics. This results in a de facto fetishization of ruins. This line is confirmed in the following articles.

Article 10: "Where traditional techniques prove inadequate, the consolidation of a monument can be achieved by the use of any modern technique of conservation and construction."

But, at the time, it was already common knowledge that nontraditional methods were responsible for great damages done by restoration work earlier in the twentieth century.

Article 11: "[. . .] since unity of style is not the aim of a restoration."

Article 12: "Replacements of missing parts must integrate harmoniously with the whole, but at the same time must be distinguishable from the original so that restoration does not falsify the artistic or historic evidence."

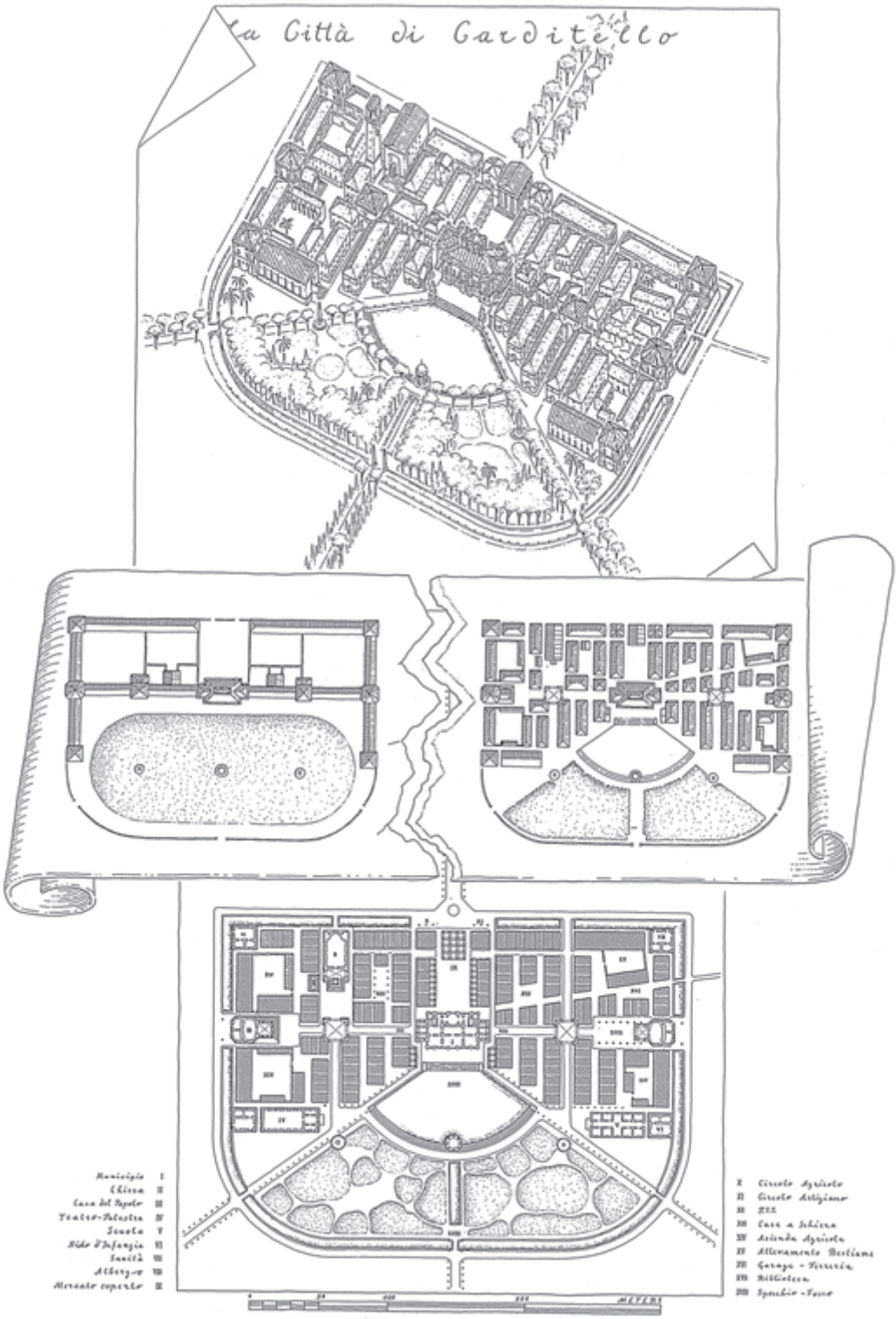
The declared effort to significantly contrast restored parts with original elements considerably reduces the coherence and hence affects negatively the harmony and structural integrity of restored buildings.

Article 15: "All reconstruction work should however be ruled out a priori. [. . .] The material used for integration should be recognizable [. . .]."

If the character and unity of a building to be preserved, occasional restoration and reconstruction work is vital. Material and formal authenticity can be guaranteed only by the use of the original construction techniques, types of natural materials, and composition principles.

In this context, is it not strange that a mentality that insists on imposing the mark of our age on premodernist buildings should readily abdicate such an a priori in the case of modernist monuments? Indeed it militates internationally for the conservative restoration of early modernist masterpieces, ignoring and even contradicting the fundamental principles of the Charter of Venice when restoring modernist works only.

PROJECT FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE BELVEDERE OF SAN LEUCIO, CASERTA, L.K., 1984. The baroque architecture of this ensemble is an interesting illustration of an architectural and typological paradox. The volumetric, typological, and decorative systems are in internal conflict with the whole. The radical recomposition proposed here demonstrates the possible amplitude of a traditional approach. Far from being conservative, this design philosophy reestablishes structural coherence between tectonic expression, building technology, and typological composition.


La Città di Garditello
Municipio I
Chiesa II
Casa del Popolo III
Teatro-Palestra IV
Scuola V
Asilo d'Infanzia VI
Sanità VII
Albergo VIII
Mercato coperto IX
X Circolo Agricolo
XI Circolo Artigiano
XII
XIII Case a Schiera
XIV Azienda Agricola
XV Allevamento Bestiame
XVI Garage - Officina
XVII Biblioteca
XVIII Spaccio - Forno
METERS

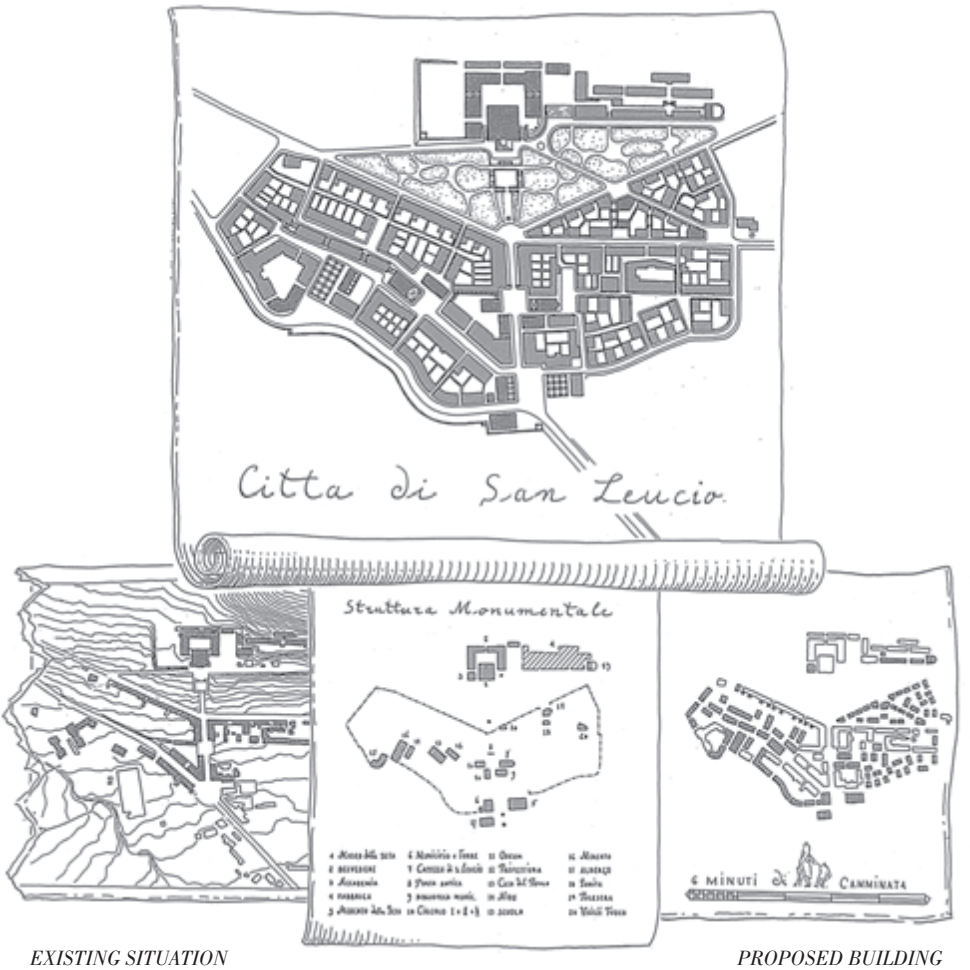
Since 1988, Docomomo (Documentation and Conservation of Buildings of the Modern Movement) at The Hague has been striving to have the works of masters and epigons of modernism listed as historic monuments. This means in practice that buildings that were designed for a short lifespan will be restored, maintained, and in some cases regularly rebuilt. Docomomo is even campaigning for the posthumous construction of works that were never built.

Such touching attitudes have, in the case of Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Pavilion or Le Corbusier's Maison Guiette in Antwerp, resulted in buildings that are not devoid of nostalgic charm. And yet any request to restore, maintain, and sometimes rebuild traditional buildings continues to meet with modernist scorn.

To sum up, the Charter of Venice subtly but no less brutally transforms normal maintenance and restoration into statutory rape. This is as absurd as wanting to restore ancient paintings and sculptures according to the precepts of a Francis Bacon or a Marcel Duchamp. Is it not a strange reversal of values when the apostles of *tabula rasa* up the odds by "mythologizing" the "historic" value of the modernist "heritage" and accuse those who do not oppose the destruction of tower blocks and modular housing estates of being insensitive to a historical heritage? At this point irony becomes torture.

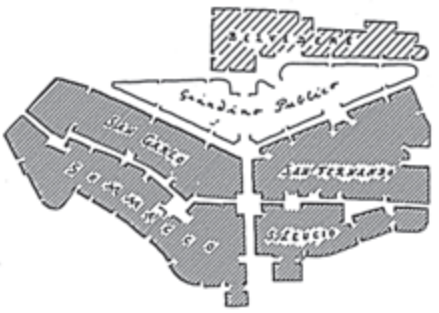
What is the aim of historic conservation? Docomomo demands the safeguard of dated and, sometimes, unstable structures solely because they have been made famous by biased and militant historiographers. The Charter of Venice advocates the destruction of the organic unity of ancient buildings. This results in a degradation of the concept of conservation itself, a regression of its own discipline, its tested techniques, its capacity to judge and value quality according to objective standards. In this way the prestige of historic conservation has itself come under threat.

MASTERPLAN FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE VILLA CARDITELLO, CASERTA, L.K., 1984. The principal elements of this immense historic ensemble, the central pavilion, and the eight towers, become the monumental focal points of a new village. The four farm-type courtyard buildings comprise research laboratories and craft and industrial workshops.

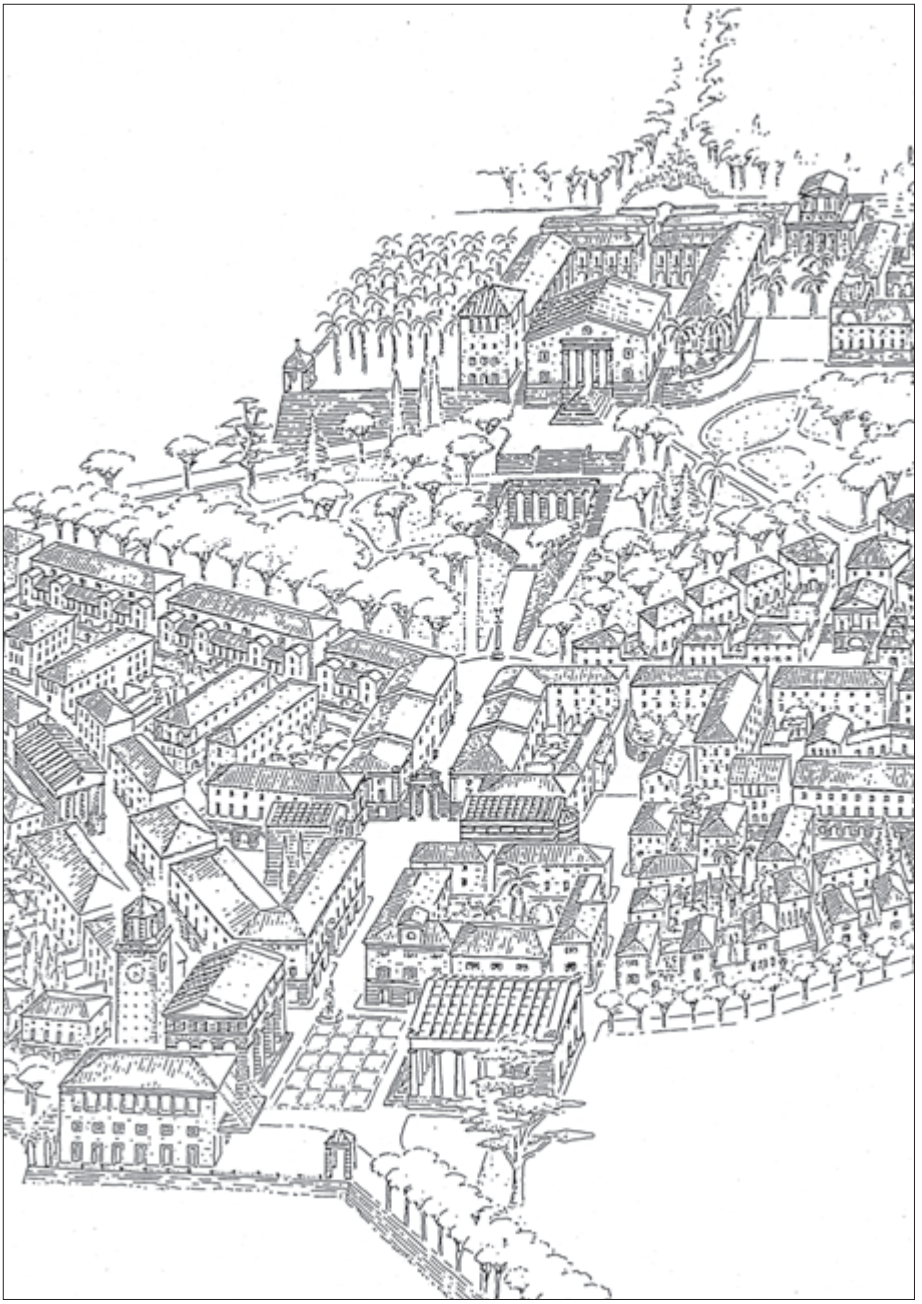


EXISTING SITUATION *PROPOSED BUILDING*

MONUMENTAL STRUCTURES



4 URBAN QUARTERS *STREETS & SQUARES*



MASTERPLAN FOR THE RESTORATION AND EXTENSION OF THE INDUSTRIAL VILLAGE OF SAN LEUCIO, CASERTA, L.K., 1984.
This plan for internal growth and completion is based on the redevelopment of the silk industry of which San Leucio was the capital in eighteenth-century Italy. The dispersed historic fragments are seamlessly integrated into the new urban fabric; they serve as models to define plot sizes, number of floors, building techniques, materials, proportions, and the character of the architecture.

PRESERVED HISTORIC CITY

HISTORIC PRESERVATION
VIA
LIFT ~ OFF
LK 2005

AFTER MODERNISM

A mere half-century ago modernist movements claimed to have developed definitive solutions to all the problems of the built environment. Today, one truth is evident: without traditional landscapes, cities, and values our environment would be a nightmare on a global scale. Modernism represents the negation of all that makes architecture useful: no roofs, no load-bearing walls, no columns, no arches, no vertical windows, no streets, no squares, no privacy, no grandeur, no decoration, no craftsmen, no history, no tradition. Surely, the next step must be to negate these negations.

In fact for several years now neo-modernists have had to admit that there is no true substitute for the traditional fabric of streets and squares. Nevertheless, they continue to reject traditional architecture with the same obsolete arguments that yesterday compelled them to reject traditional urbanism.

Today, fifty years of modernism and thirty centuries of traditional architecture can be compared and judged on objective and comparable levels. In fact, the public will accept any city plan and skyline provided that its architecture is traditional. The eradication of the teaching of traditional architecture has not succeeded in eliminating the demand and need for traditional architecture nor its worldwide practice. For three generations now modernist denunciations have merely succeeded in excluding traditional architecture from public commissions and teaching, and have thereby brought it to its poorest level of expression in history.

In parallel, modernism produced its most horrific results when it reigned in absolute control. It was not by chance that it achieved its best results when holding a minority position in architecture, as was the case in the 1920s. This could hopefully be the case again in the future.

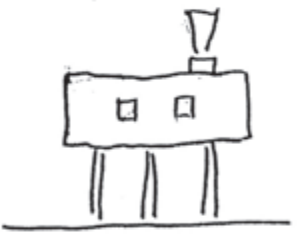
In the generalized barbarity of the machine that colonizes cities and landscapes with mediocre dwellings and sheds, everyone is on the losing side. Today the burning question is no longer of who will win the war, but of how to increase quality on all sides by establishing intelligent, democratic competition, a pluralist education, and nonpartisan, effective criticism.

30 A.D.

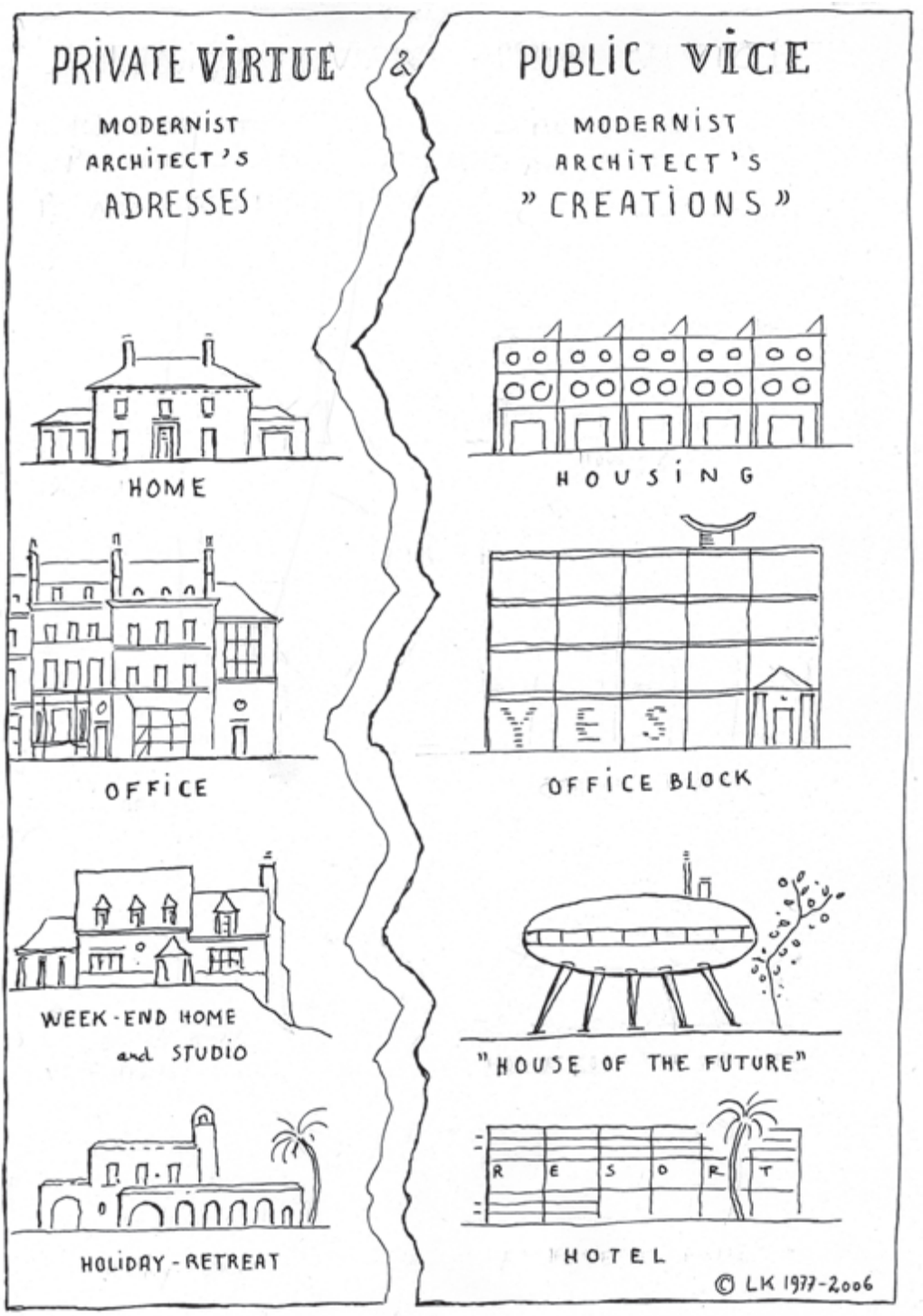
1030 A.D.

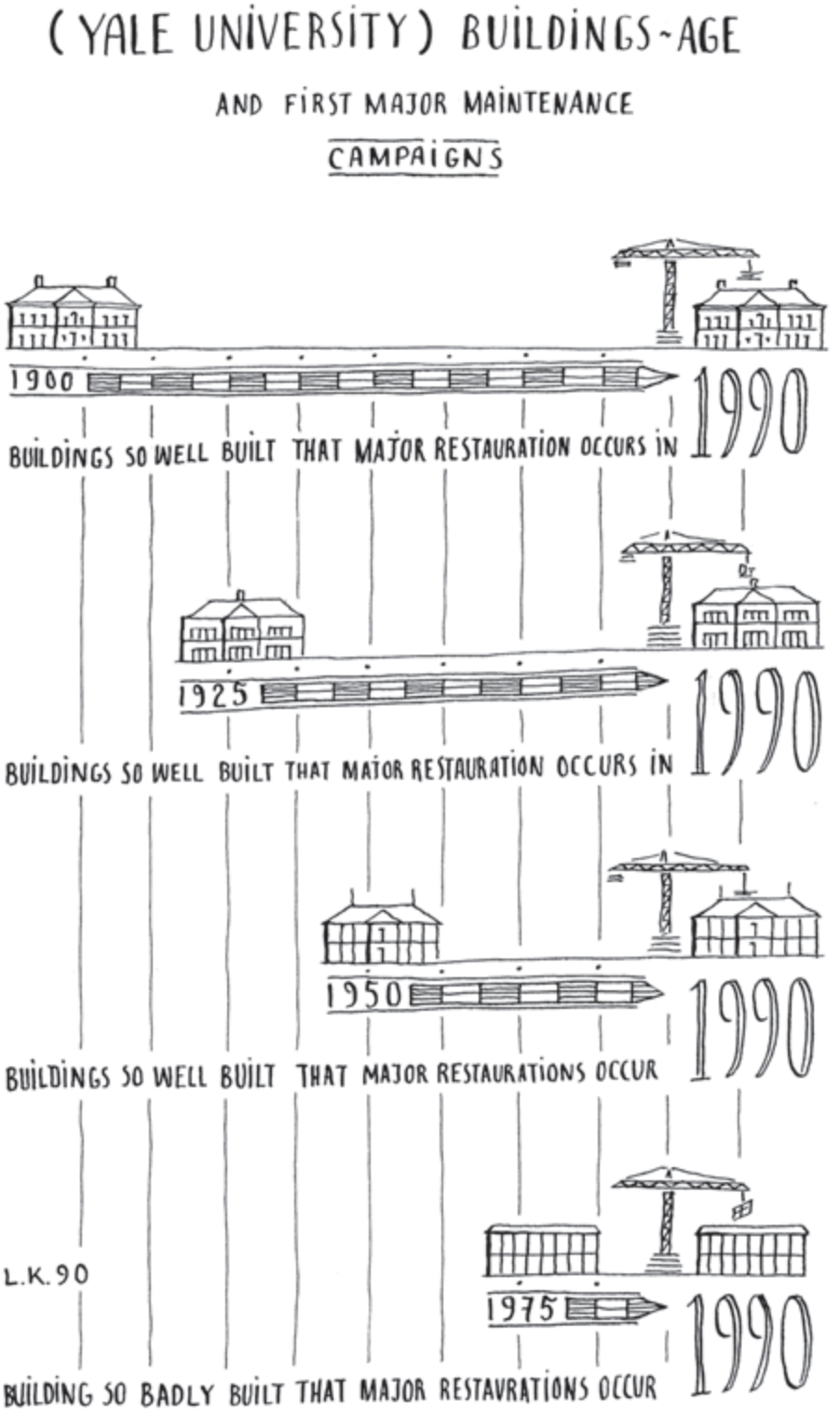
1830 A.D.

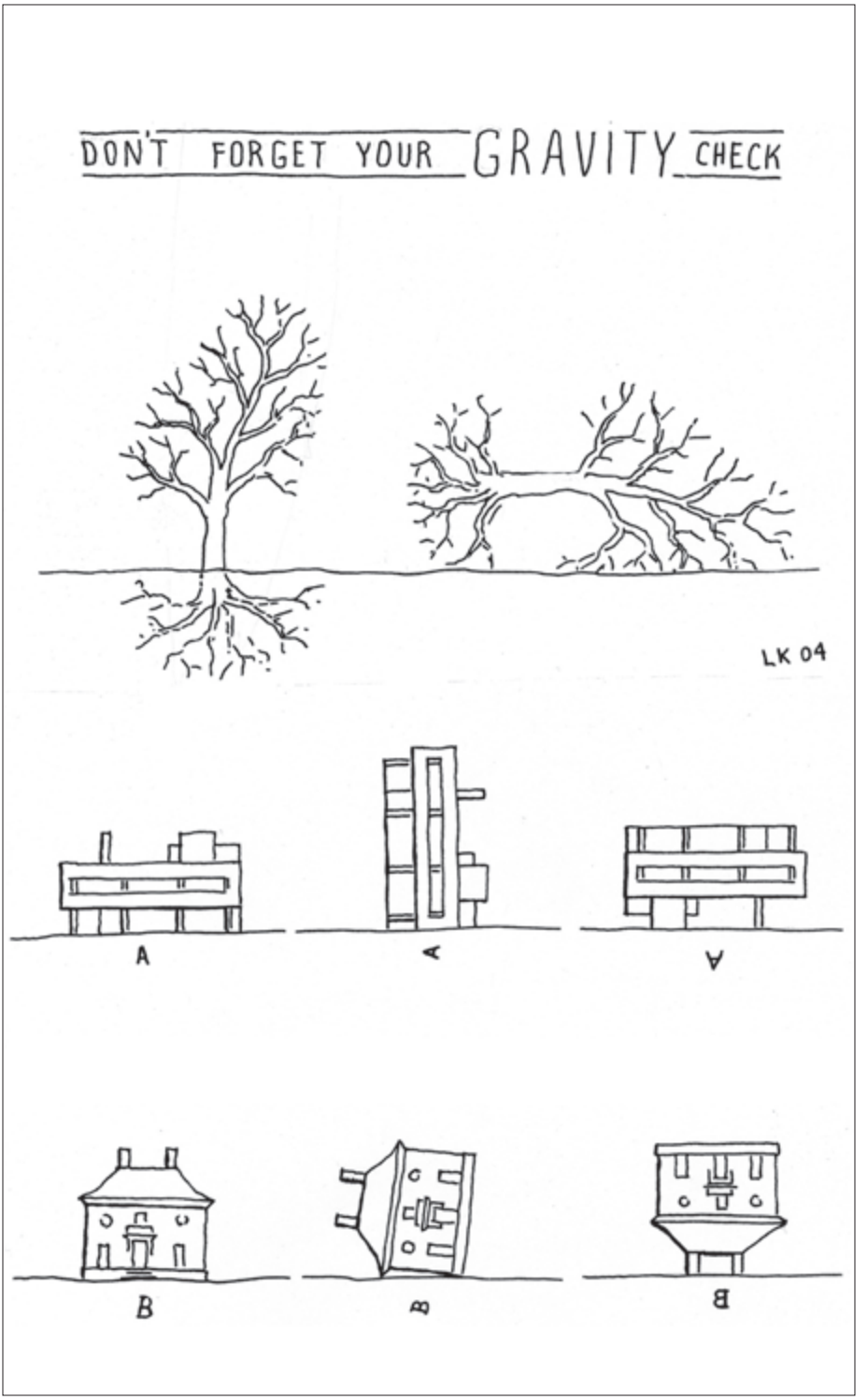
1930 A.D.



2030 A.D.


PRIVATE VIRTUE
MODERNIST ARCHITECT'S ADRESSES
&
PUBLIC VICE
MODERNIST ARCHITECT'S "CREATIONS"
HOME
HOUSING
OFFICE
OFFICE BLOCK
WEEK-END HOME and STUDIO
"HOUSE OF THE FUTURE"
HOLIDAY-RETREAT
RESORT
HOTEL
© LK 1977-2006
"SO WHAT ?" THEYSAY, WOULDN'TTHEY:


(YALE UNIVERSITY) BUILDINGS-AGE
AND FIRST MAJOR MAINTENANCE
CAMPAIGNS
1900
1990
BUILDINGS SO WELL BUILT THAT MAJOR RESTAURATION OCCURS IN
1925
1990
BUILDINGS SO WELL BUILT THAT MAJOR RESTAURATION OCCURS IN
1950
1990
BUILDINGS SO WELL BUILT THAT MAJOR RESTAURATIONS OCCUR
L.K.90
1975
1990
BUILDING SO BADLY BUILT THAT MAJOR RESTAVRATIONS OCCUR


DON'T FORGET YOUR GRAVITY CHECK
LK 04
A
A
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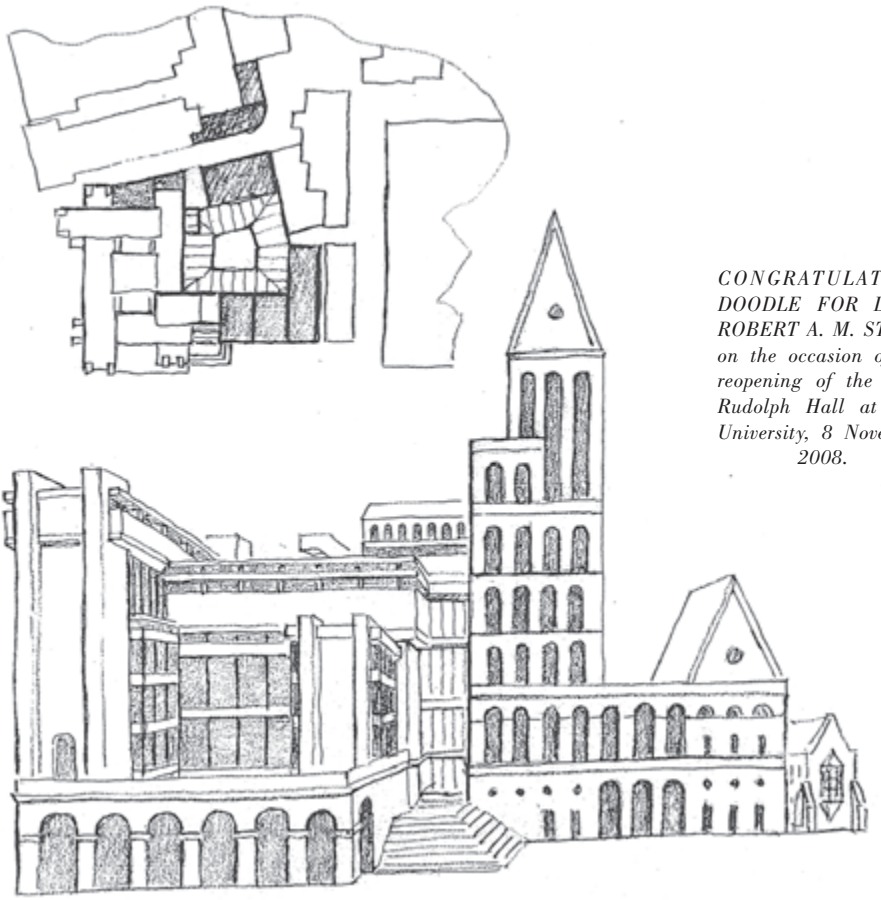
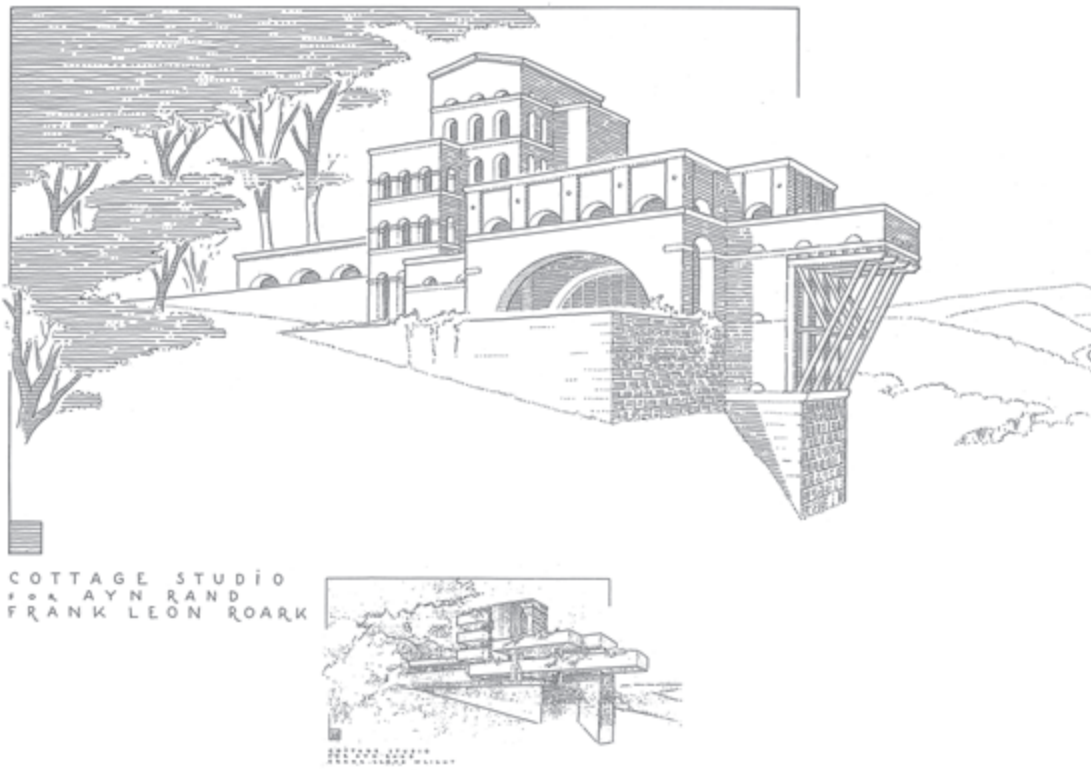
B

GAINED IN TRANSLATION

In 2002, Leon Krier's Graduate Design Studio at Yale School of Architecture subjected famous architectural masterpieces of modernism to a series of material and tectonic translations. The thesis was, that, given the possibility of translating poetry from one language to another without loss, aesthetic, and architectural ideals embodied in the Villa Savoy, the Villa Stein –De Monzie, the Villa Baizeau, the Villa Shodan, the Robie House, the Barcelona Pavilion, could be realized and expressed successfully by the mere use of traditional building techniques and local natural materials, ie: without the vaunted "new materials and technologies" The innovative method proved beyond a doubt that the vernacular and classical design disciplines would not only have allowed Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, or Frank Lloyd Wright to fully deploy their unique talents, and more importantly would have prevented them from committing excesses such as the Mile High Skyscraper or Plan Voisin for Paris, hubristic temptations against which, geniuses have no more defenses than common mortals.



CONGRATULATORY DOODLE FOR DEAN ROBERT A. M. STERN on the occasion of the reopening of the Paul Rudolph Hall at Yale University, 8 November 2008.


COTTAGE STUDIO
for AYN RAND
FRANK LEON ROARK

CHILE
VILLA ERRAZURIZ
LE CORBUSIER 1930
TRANSLATION
LEON KAIER
2008

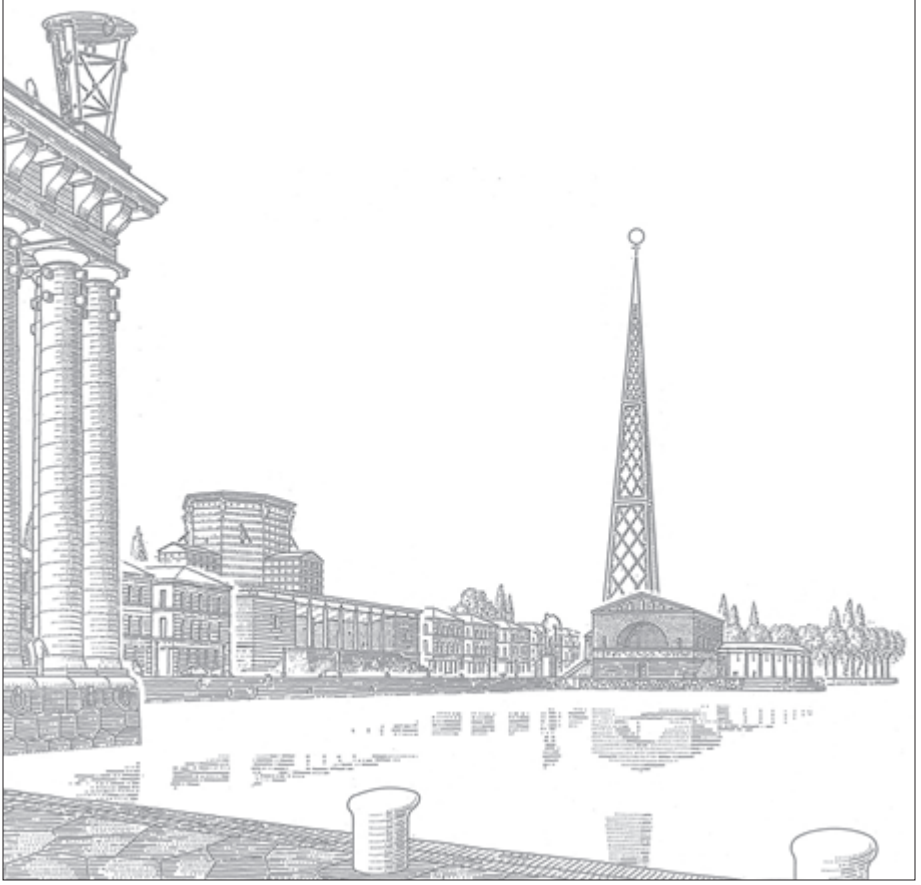
POUNDBURY, DORSET, UK

DUCHY OF CORNWALL DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER IV

PROSPECTS FOR A NEW URBANISM

Urbanism is essentially a matter of public spaces. plot sizes, plot ratios, and number of floors. There are specific types, dimensions, ratios, and numbers that allow us to build harmonious cities and others that inevitably lead to suburban sprawl, commercial strips, and/or metropolitan congestion. There are forms of high-risk mega-developments that produce mega-profits and mega-failures. There are others based on individual talent and enterprise that stimulate civilized competition and lead to humane and agreeable towns. The traditional city performs the miracle of allowing contrasting and competing ambitions, the most modest and greatest of talents to strive and thrive as neighbors; to build in harmony. That is the definition of urbanity and urban civilization.



FORMS OF URBAN OVEREXPANSION

ECOLOGY AND URBANISM • THE VITAL LINK

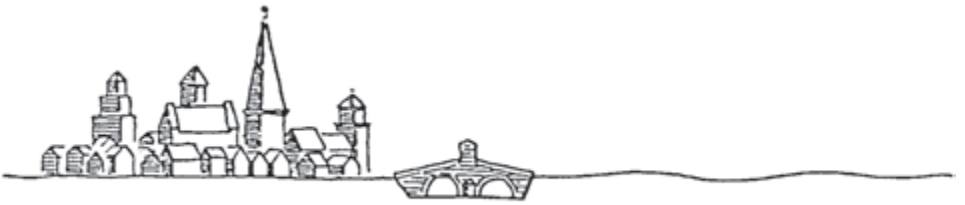
CRITIQUE OF INDUSTRIAL PLANNING AND FUNCTIONAL ZONING

THE URBANIZATION OF THE SUBURBS
New spaces for urban development and the internal growth of cities

THE NEED TO REFORM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

THE MASTERPLAN, A DEFINITION

THE MASTERPLAN, A TOOL OF PUBLIC INTEREST



Mature CITY

VERTICAL & HORIZONTAL "OVEREXPANSION"

Organic EXPANSION through DUPLICATION

GROWTH MAKES SENSE ONLY WHEN IT HAS A PREDETERMINED GOAL. MATURITY IS THE END goal of all growth. Overexpansion signifies a loss of limits. All excessive expansion and growth lead to the exhaustion of the generative process.

FORMS OF URBAN OVEREXPANSION

Most of the problems of our settlements have a single root cause, namely that, instead of growing organically by means of the multiplication or duplication of autonomous quarters, twentieth-century cities suffer from various forms of mono-functional overexpansion, which create chaos in terms of their structure, use and appearance. In addition, monofunctional overexpansions cause the critical imbalance between center and periphery.

1) Urban centers tend to overexpand vertically. This phenomenon leads to an excessive density of buildings, activities and users, which in turn results in an explosion of land values and rents.
2) Suburban peripheries are overexpanding horizontally, driven outward by the low cost of land, resulting in very low densities of buildings, uses, and activities.

These two forms of hypertrophy condition each other. The resulting functional problems are interdependent and cannot be solved in isolation.

There exists a radical qualitative difference between the concepts of "urb" and "sub-urb." Their contradictory nature is expressed in contrasting terms; suburb in most languages being (dis)qualified by reductive adjectives: ban-lieu, faux-bourg, vorort, suburb ["ban" (forbidden), "faux" (false), "vor" (outside), "sub" (less)].

ECOLOGY AND URBANISM • THE VITAL LINK

Any protests against the erosion of natural resources or the destruction of cities and the countryside remain futile for as long as they fail to refer to credible, workable solutions. Without a global vision of environmental processes, local protest movements routinely exhaust themselves in petty detail because the imperatives of change are defined by policy decisions at a national or continental level. A critique without a vision demonstrates an abdication of intelligence for it is a manifestation of the same mental confusion of which the fragmented city is both result and cause, expression and instrument. To know and not to act is ultimately not to know, said Mishima.

Only a global, philosophical, technical, cultural, moral, economic, and aesthetic vision can enable us to influence the imperatives that shape the natural and cultural environment. The authority and legitimacy of architecture and urbanism can be regained today only by offering practical solutions within an ecological context. Cities and landscapes are illustrations of our spiritual and material worth. They not only express our values but give them a tangible reality. They determine the way in which we use or squander our energy, time, and land resources.

The realization of ecological urbanism, agriculture, and industry represents a challenging task for industrial civilization. Over the past two centuries, technical changes have overwhelmed the customs and structures of civil society. The ecological ethics that are now burgeoning are profoundly changing industrial, technological, and social imperatives.

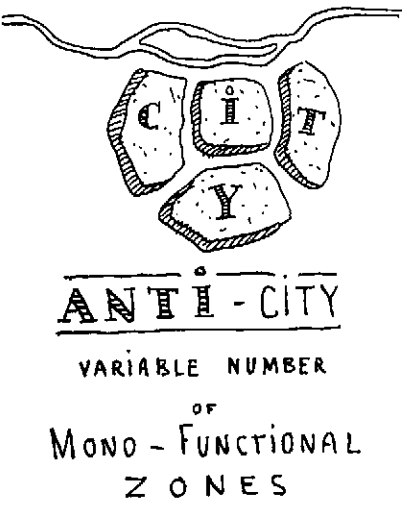
Today, a great deal of energy and imagination is devoted to producing so-called "ecological" buildings, tools, and consumer goods. But such praiseworthy enterprises often distract the general public's attention from the main aim of ecology, which is, of necessity, contextual. Whether in the long term the air is polluted by public buses or private cars, or whether suburbanites live in ecologically perfect houses are not questions of ecological relevance. The ecological challenge lies in the self-reorganization of territorial relationships within society's daily routines.

We are making a mistake if we call any large group of buildings a city, for only a certain structure and form can merit that name. A city is not the inevitable result of a society's building activities. A city can be built and prosper only if it represents the goals of individuals, of a society and its institutions. A city is not an accident but the result of coherent visions and aims. It is an invention of the human spirit. Without this guiding idea there would be no urban civilization. Manufacturing and commercial logic does not by sheer necessity produce cities of enduring value. While these activities are necessary conditions for building settlements, great cities are never their automatic by-product. Qualities such as civic vitality, urbanity, beauty, pride of home, citizenship, character, and the beauty of public spaces, squares, parks, and architecture are not just wild flowers in the field of economic relationships. Industrial dynamism left to its own logic occupies land in almost military fashion, causing much collateral damage.

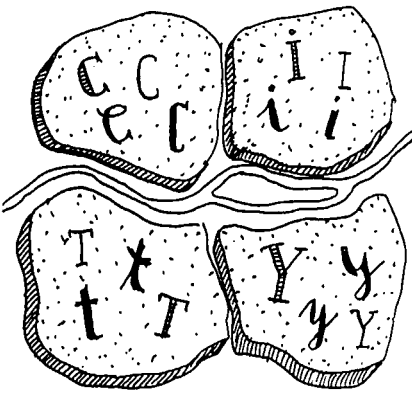
For this reason, an "ecological" vision cannot be limited to a city, a region, or even a country. It must be set in a continental context and be given form in a charter for the environment and for the city. Such a charter should propose typical solutions to typical problems found on every scale in the city, the suburbs, and the countryside. Limiting its scope to indisputable certainties proved by age-old experience, this charter has to transcend the partisan interests of political, industrial, financial, and military organizations, as well as local and national religious and cultural groups. It must be based on a long-term political, cultural, and economic consensus; it is the necessary complement of the political constitution of modern nations, an ethical and civilizing vision of universal stature.

POUNDBURY, MARKET HALL AND TOWER, PAINTING BY CARL LAUBIN, AFTER DRAWING BY L.K., 1992. Building started in March 1994. The town is composed of four independent quarters, each integrating all urban uses within a five minute walking distance.

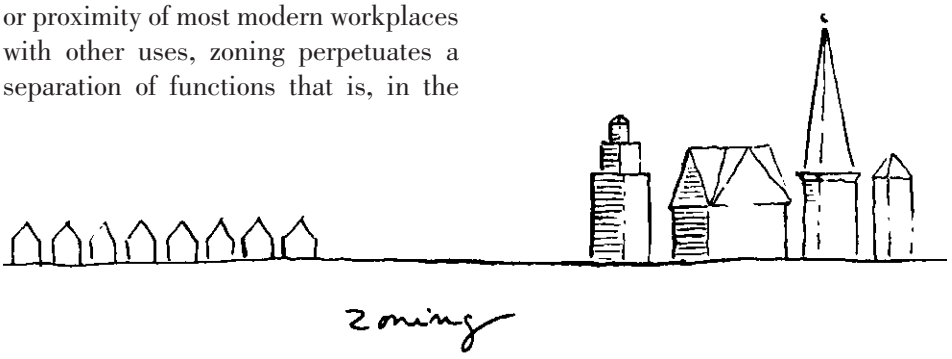
CRITIQUE OF INDUSTRIAL PLANNING AND FUNCTIONAL ZONING

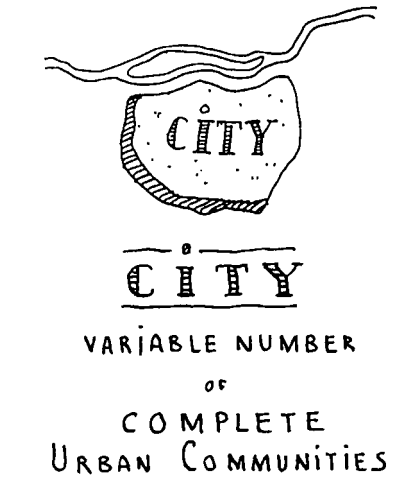


The functional zoning popularized by the Charter of Athens of 1931 was, contrary to its universal pretensions, purely a technique for industrial development. It is an instrument for industrial expansion that is as effective as it is rudimentary. It inevitably leads to the breakup of integrated, poly-functional settlements (large cities, parishes, urban quarters, villages) into mono-functional zones (residential neighborhoods, dormitory towns, campuses, shopping centers, industrial zones, business parks, etc.). Mono-functional zoning (residential, educational, recreational, business, industrial, administrative . . .) is the technical and legal tool for this type of fragmentation. Zoning regulations and the preferential allocation of financial resources to "zoned" development plans are its political and economic manifestations.



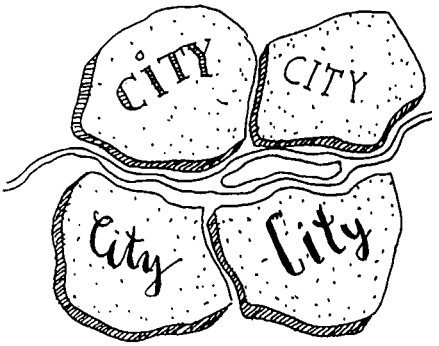
Instead of encouraging the organic integration of urban functions, zoning imposes their mechanical segregation. Zoning regulations have now been introduced in the majority of the industrialized countries. Although noise and pollution controls permit the integration or proximity of most modern workplaces with other uses, zoning perpetuates a separation of functions that is, in the





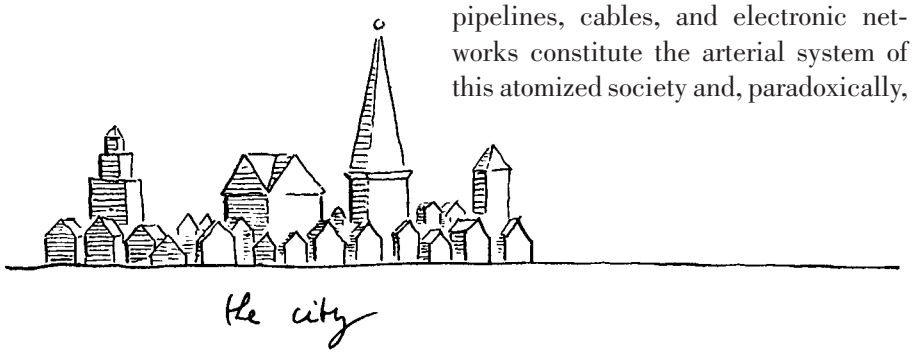
majority of cases, both unnecessary and anachronistic for it is both anti-urban and anti-ecological. Ultimately it is anti-modern, a relic of the XIXth century.

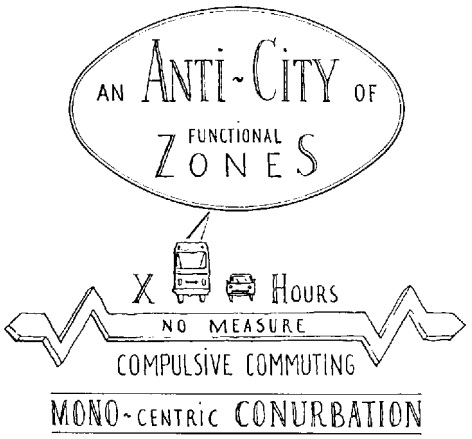
The first imperative of zoning is to organize each part of the territory (land and countryside) in such a way that the citizen can accomplish only one function in one place at one time. The second imperative of zoning is the effective daily mobilization of the whole of society (adults, old and young, children and babies, the ill and healthy, rich and poor, the handicapped and the able-bodied, those in and those out of work, the employed and their employers) in accomplishing simple daily tasks. Zoning has made modern life extremely complex and wasteful in terms of transportation time. The most remarkable consequence of functional zoning is that it guarantees the maximum consumption of units of time, energy, hardware, and land for the execution of the daily functions of the whole of society.



The circulation of people, goods, and information represents now the principal activity of man's industrial metabolism with nature.

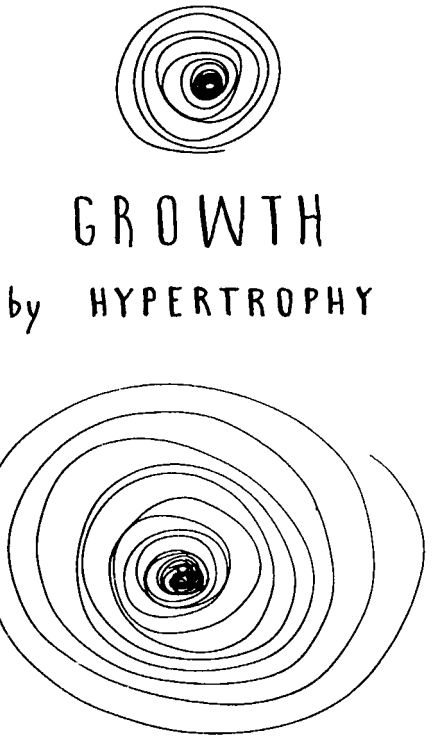
Roads, highways, canals, air corridors, pipelines, cables, and electronic networks constitute the arterial system of this atomized society and, paradoxically,





its binding element. Train, car, airplane, computer, telephone, fax, internet, and television are its principal instruments, the necessary extensions of the human body and mind. They now represent the primary cause of ecological problems although tomorrow they will of necessity become instruments of ecology.

All industrial states, irrespective of their political ideology, promote and impose functional zoning in cities and the countryside against all forms of resistance. Yet functional zoning is not a neutral tool. It transforms a society of active, independent individuals into mobilized yet passive masses. Functional zoning replaces the organic order of the city with the mechanical disorder of the suburbs and the absence of true centers and centrality.



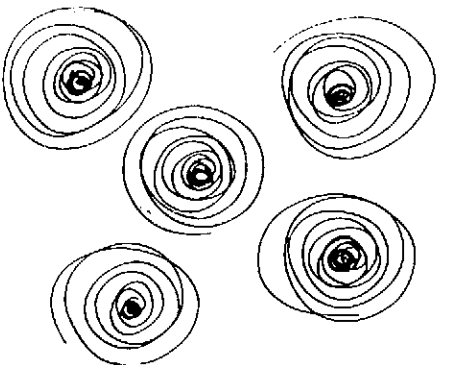
The functional fragmentation of a city results ipso facto in the destruction of the countryside; it means the effective dissolution of town and country. It reduces rural and urban communities, countryside and forests, nature, natural and human resources into mere statistics expressed in interchangeable figures and densities. Industrial logic would appear to be in conflict with social and ecological logic, with ethical and aesthetic logic. It transforms each citizen into a potential and involuntary agent of energy waste.

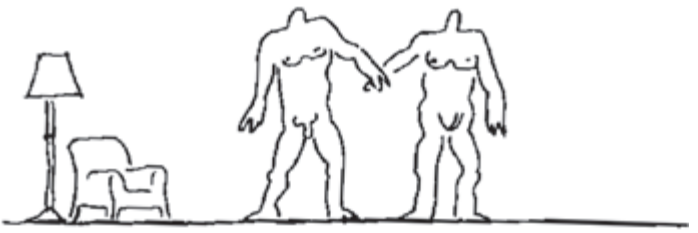
In fact, industrial collectivism often leads to the suspension of notions of economy and ethics. It creates problems that it is incapable of solving and thus of assuming. It suspends the notion of individual or collective responsibility in order to achieve its end goals unchallenged. When left to itself industrial logic is amoral, asocial, and non-ecological;

although necessary, it ought to be but a subordinate instrument of civilization not a metaphysical absolute. Its absolute domination is possible only in the absence of foundational and sustaining civilizing myths. Although industrial logic is dominated by the idea of growth it seems to remain in a state of pathological adolescence and thus is incapable of achieving full maturity, the goal of all forms of growth. No form of industrial zoning nor any public or private transport policy can seriously reduce the land, energy and time costs generated by functional zoning. Indeed, functional zoning is the primary cause of the squandering of land, energy, and time.

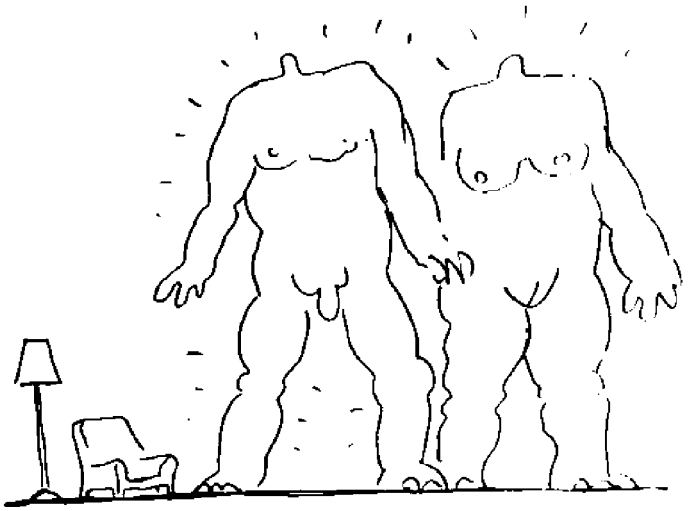
The megastructural and monocultural zoning of whole regions and even continents is urban zoning writ large. The logistical, ecological and social problems that ensue from such gigantism are the geometrically enlarged versions of those that proceed from urban zoning ordinances.

The most extreme examples of regional zoning were realized with terrible consequences in the former Soviet Union. And yet, although the link between ecological depletion and cultural devastation is more visible in totalitarian regimes, the disemboweled neighborhoods of many North American cities are in just as dramatic a state of decay. These tragic failures mark the dead ends of too many forms of collectivism. Traditional urbanism, the multifarity and proximity of uses, and the great dimensional and functional variety of building plots are instruments without which societies based on individual responsibility, entrepreneurship, and free competition cannot produce civilized cities and villages.



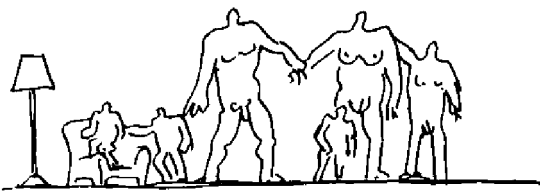


FROM SMALL TO LARGE FAMILY



MONSTROUS FORM OF GROWTH

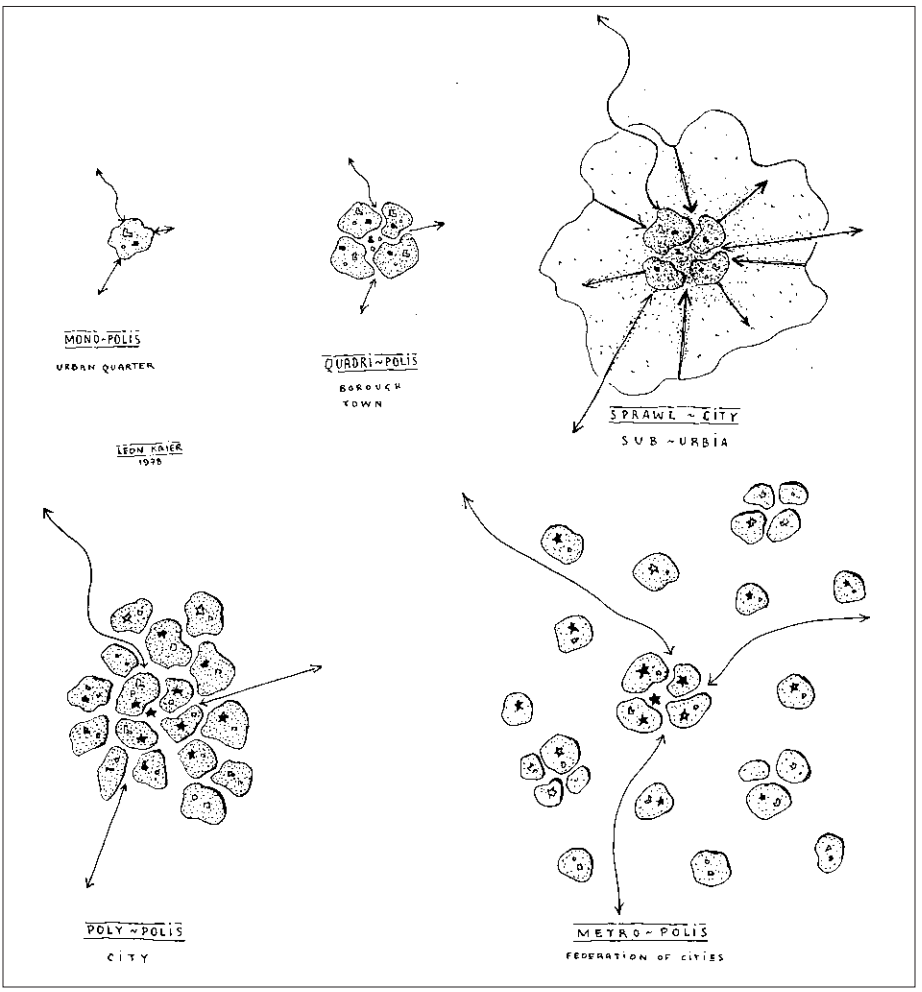
OBESITY



ORGANIC FORM OF GROWTH

MULTIPLICATION

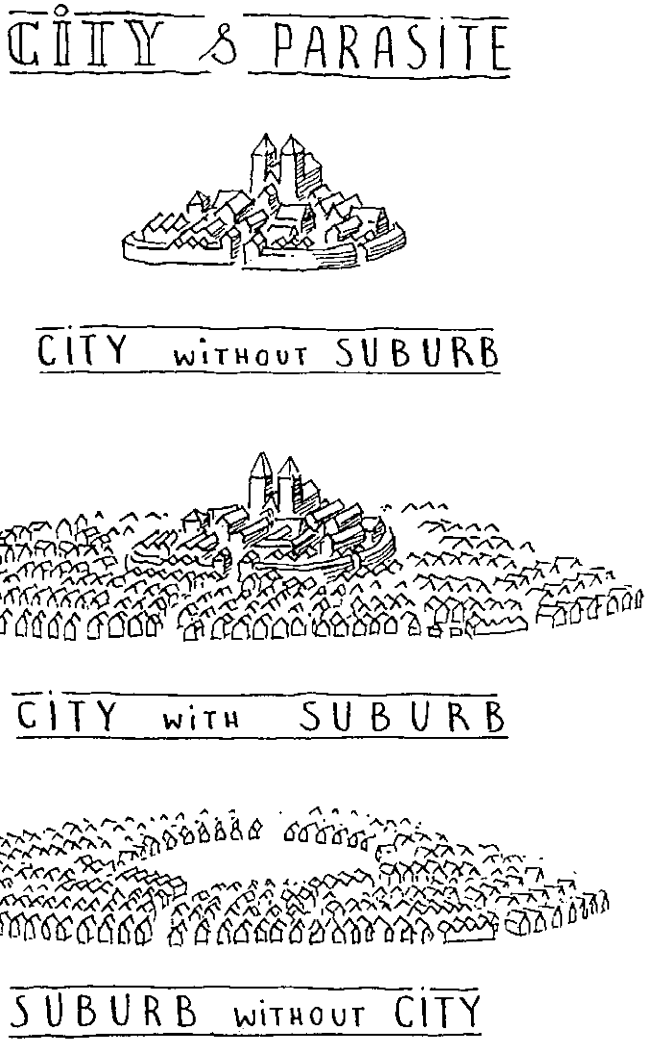
The notion of a city only becomes a meaningful reality when urban communities are formed. The word "community" is used advisedly, and not in a romantic or idealistic sense. An urban community is first and foremost a community governed by everyday material concerns and self-interests. The traditional concept of the urban quarter is the material and cultural materialization of these concerns. As with any other living organism, cities have optimum dimensions. Large cities must therefore consist of a number of quarters of optimum dimensions. A family grows not by extending the girth of its genitors but through reproduction or multiplication. Similarly, a city can only grow through an increase in the number of complete urban quarters. Growth is inseparable from the concept of maturity, i.e., normal and optimum size. Independence can only be gained at maturity, and only independent and mature organisms have the ability to reproduce.

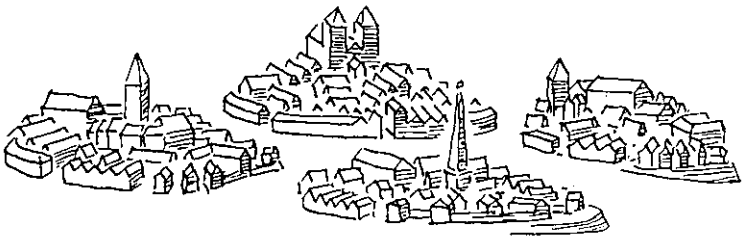


THE URBANIZATION OF THE SUBURBS

New spaces for urban development and the internal growth of cities

The metabolism between the suburbs and the center is doomed from the outset to fatal corrosion. This fate must be reversed if we are to avoid promoting ever-new forms of barbarism. The obligatory mobility of the suburban masses represents a threat to both city and countryside. This modern syndrome can be checked only by the development of urban civilization within the suburbs. The urban economy will no longer grow by expansion into the surrounding countryside or the over-development of historic centers, but by the redevelopment, maturating, opening





CITIES WITHIN THE CITY

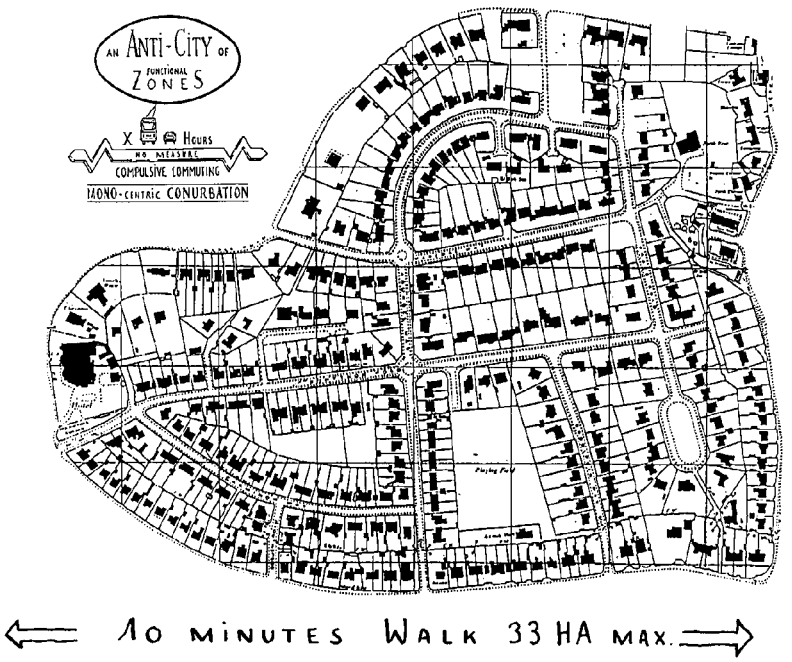
up, completion, and internal growth of the suburbs. This can be the goal of a truly "ecological" civilization. The transformation of the suburbs will be enabled by the abrogation of functional zoning practices, the redrafting of land use plans, and the revision of urban development programs.

The polycentric reorganization of towns, i.e., the transformation of underdeveloped suburbs into autonomous urban quarters and villages, will be the impetus for a process of territorial transformation, internal growth, and the flowering of the suburbs. It will make vast tracts of single-family houses, public housing, and monofunctional business, educational, commercial, and industrial zones available for redevelopment. In these specific areas ecological development plans will permit the establishment of the structure and functions they lack individually and that are necessary for their economy, their community life, and their functional autonomy.

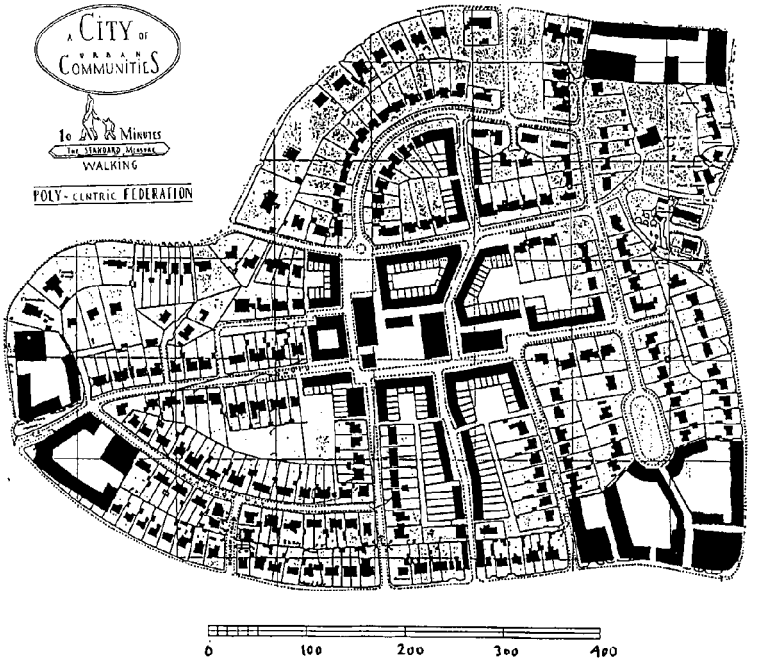
The reorganization and the reconstruction of badly organized zones will relieve the real estate pressure on the open countryside and in historic centers, which, by definition, have reached optimum development with respect to density, forms, functions, and styles.

To date, historic centers remain the only true centers of urban, civilized society. They account, however, for only a tiny area in comparison with the vast stretches of suburbs. Development tasks in historic centers should be redefined according to the following goals: to round off their perimeters and complete fragmented areas by the use of block, plot, and building types; street and square types; and building techniques and architecture that are in harmony with the existing patterns; to remove single-use, commercial, business, and other colossi; to adjust plot-ratios and uses to the structural capacities of the existing district; to reintroduce the complete range of urban functions within walking distance.

All maintenance, conservation, restoration, and rebuilding should use traditional building techniques and natural, mostly local materials.



TYPICAL SEGMENT OF A 100% RESIDENTIAL SUBURB



REDEVELOPMENT THROUGH FUNCTIONAL AND TYPOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

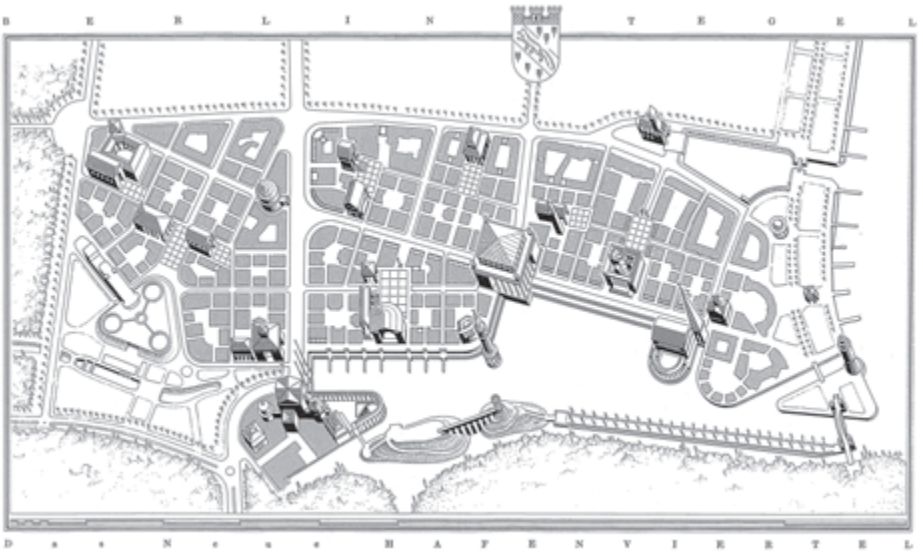
OVER-development of CENTER

UNJUSTIFIABLE PROFIT-MAKING

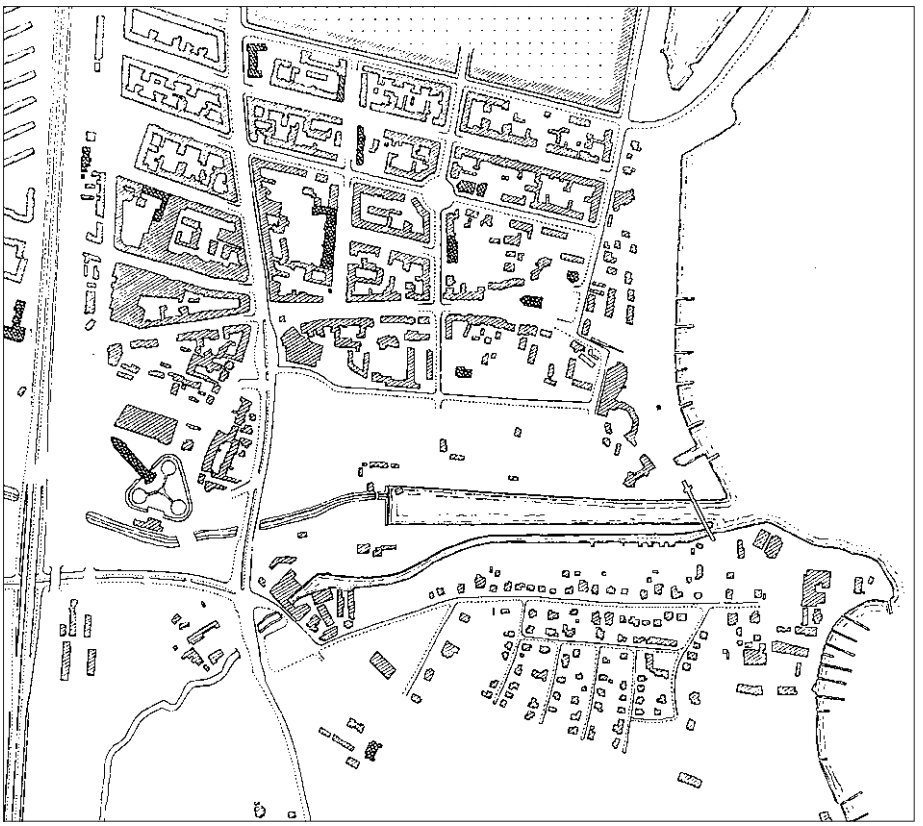
Urbanization of SUB-urb !

JUSTIFIED PROFIT MAKING

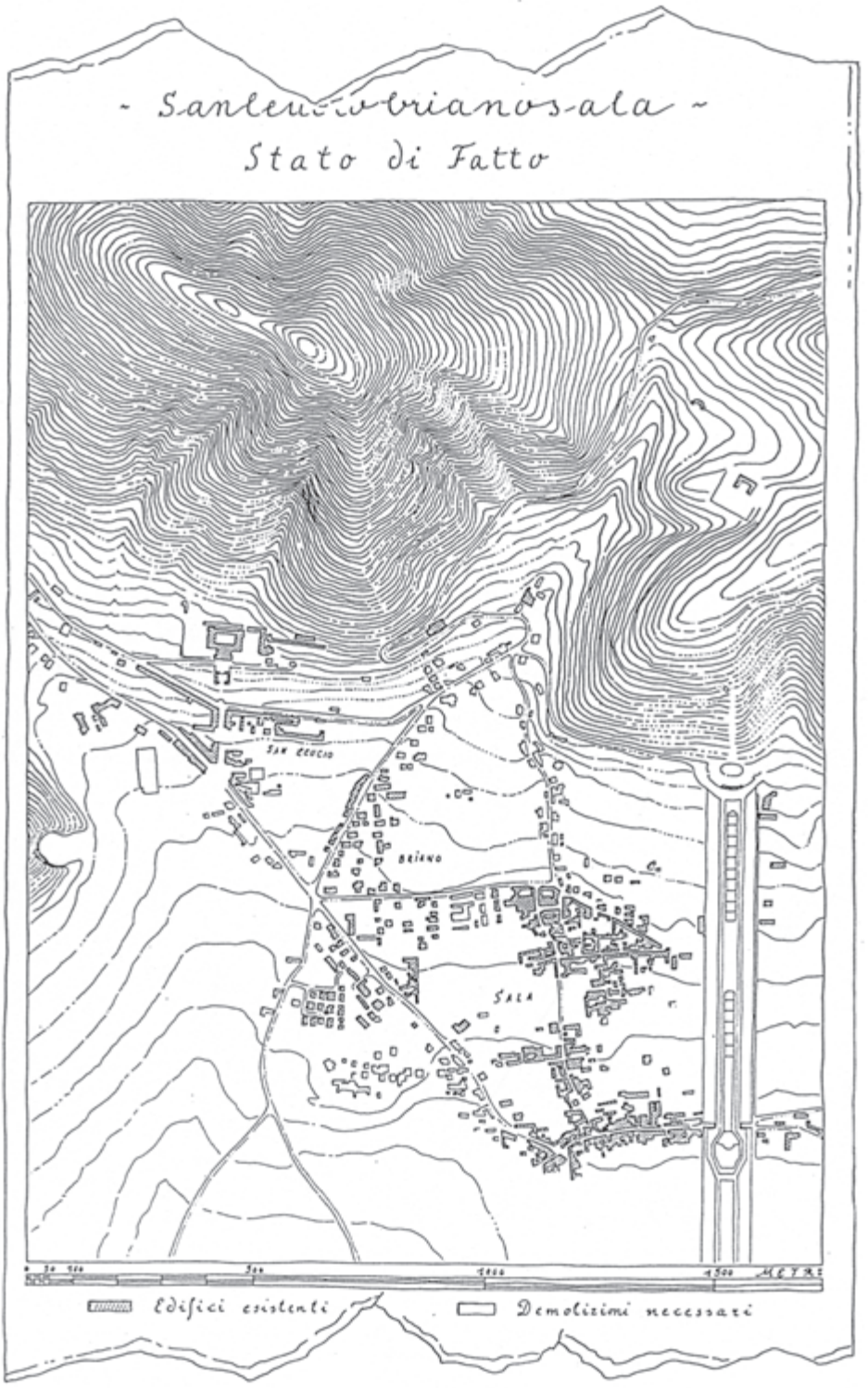
FUNDAMENTAL CHOICES OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT

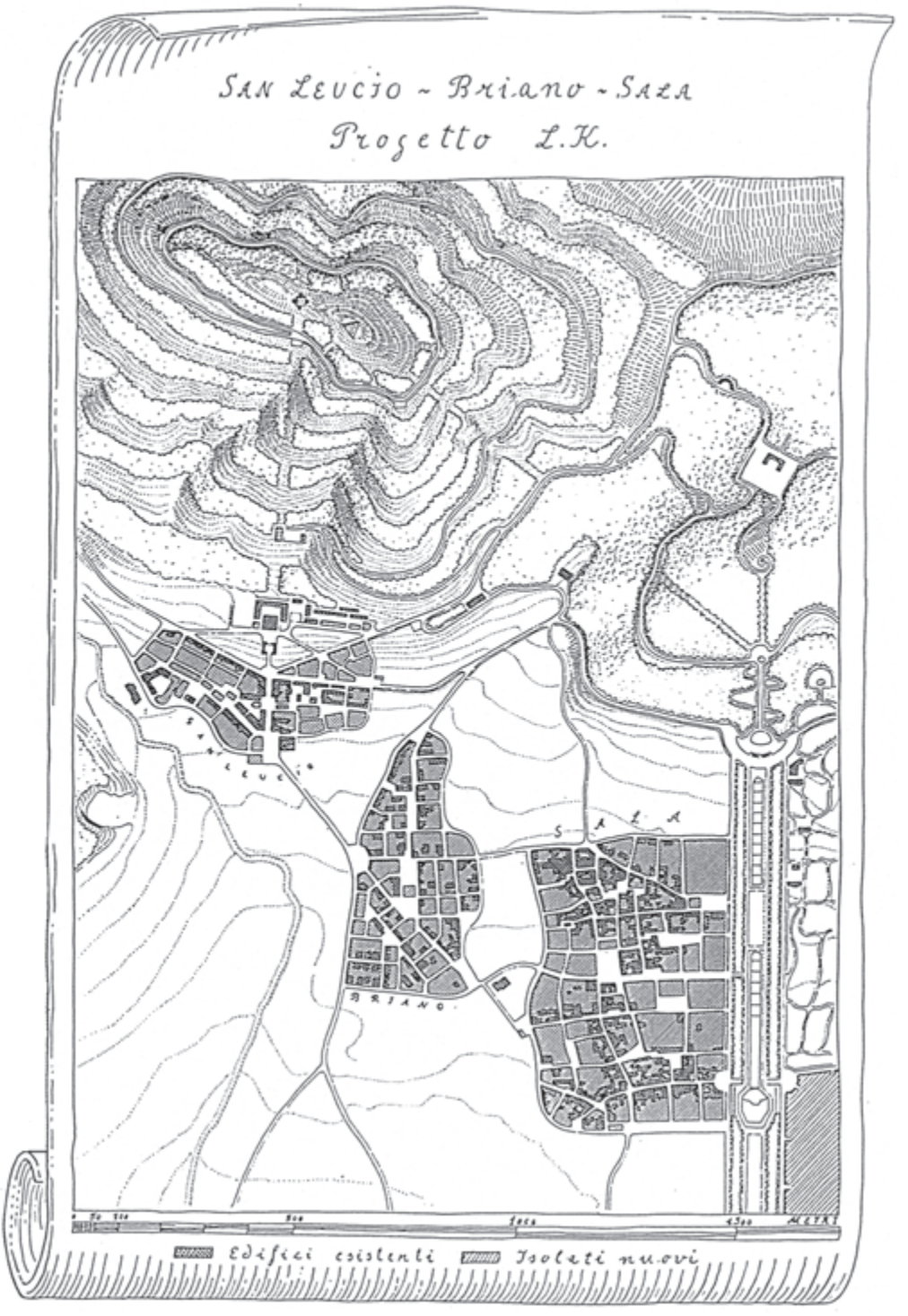


Above: TOURIST MAP OF THE NEW PORT QUARTER, TEGEL, BERLIN, L.K., 1980. Only public buildings of monumental character are represented in three dimensions. Here the urban skyline is exclusively dominated by the highly characterized profiles of civic buildings. They occupy the foci of the main vistas, avenues, and public spaces.



Below Left and Right: MASTERPLAN FOR THE URBANIZATION OF THE BOROUGH OF TEGEL, L.K., 1980. Left image shows the suburb of Berlin made up of disparate urban and suburban fragments. The masterplan proposes the division of Tegel into four independent urban quarters, each expanded through its own constituted morphological, typological, and geometric order.


- Santeusebrianos-ala -
Stato di Fatto
San Cecilio
Belino
Sala
Edifici esistenti
Demolizioni necessari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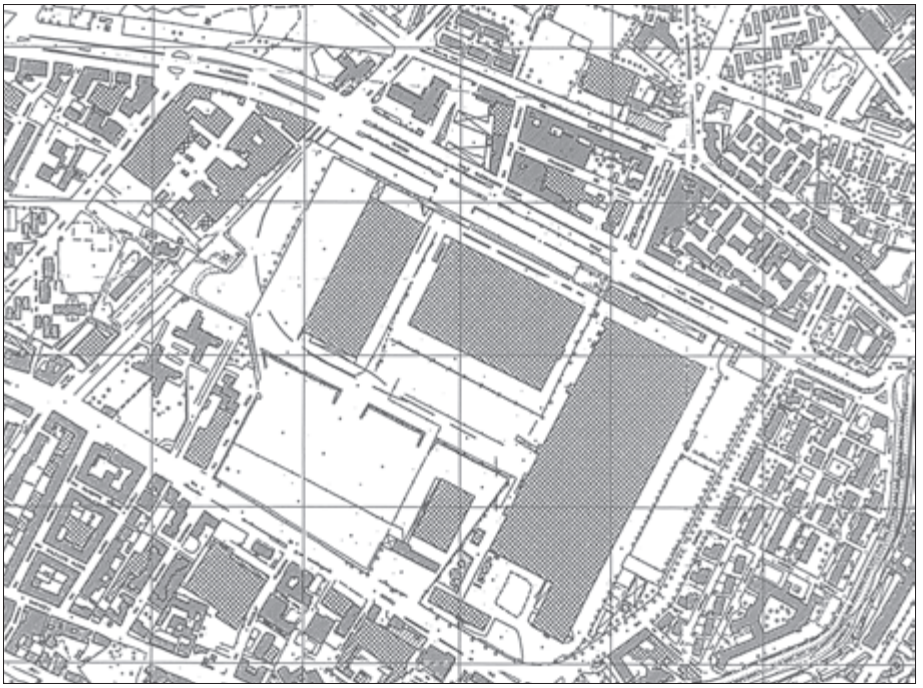
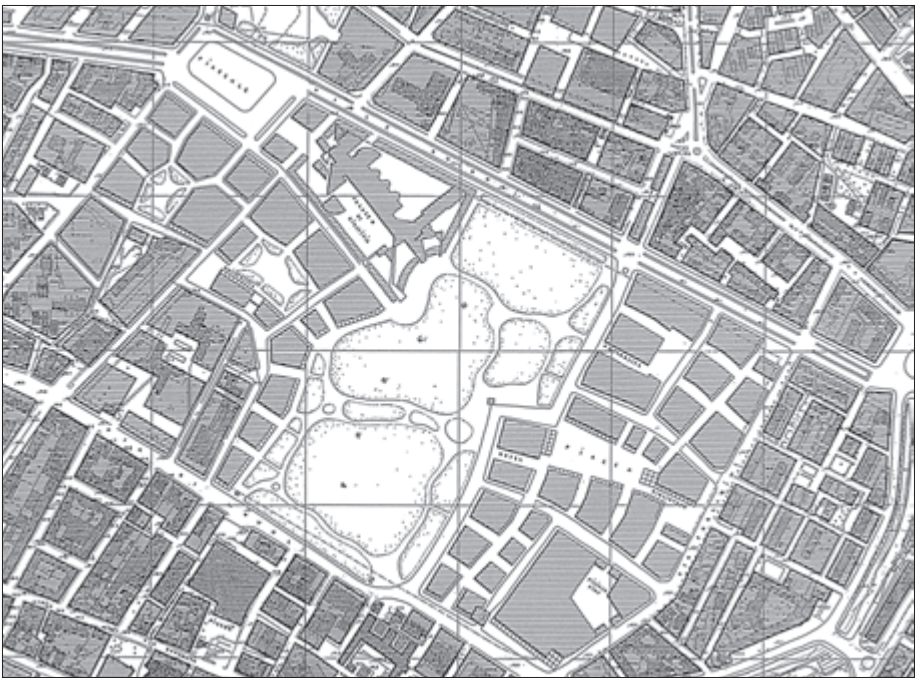
Progetto L.K.
Edifici esistenti
Isolati nuovi



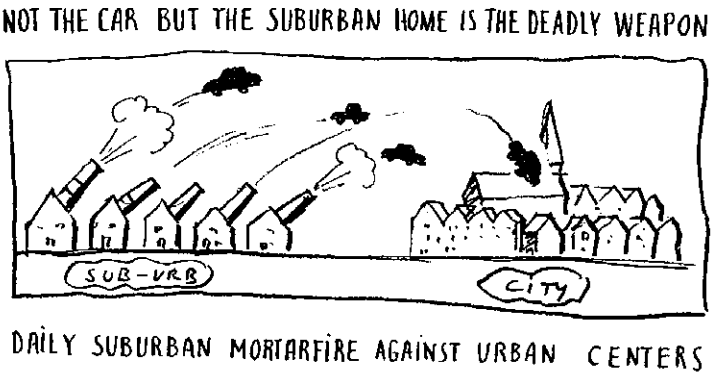
MASTERPLAN FOR FLORENCE-NOVOLI, L.K., 1993.
Above: The FIAT site is in the center. Demolition of the factory began in 1997. Below: New building alignments. Existing buildings are in darker shading. Due to a change of the municipal junta, LK's codes for building and landscaping have been systematically misinterpreted to ominous effect.



THE NEED TO REFORM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

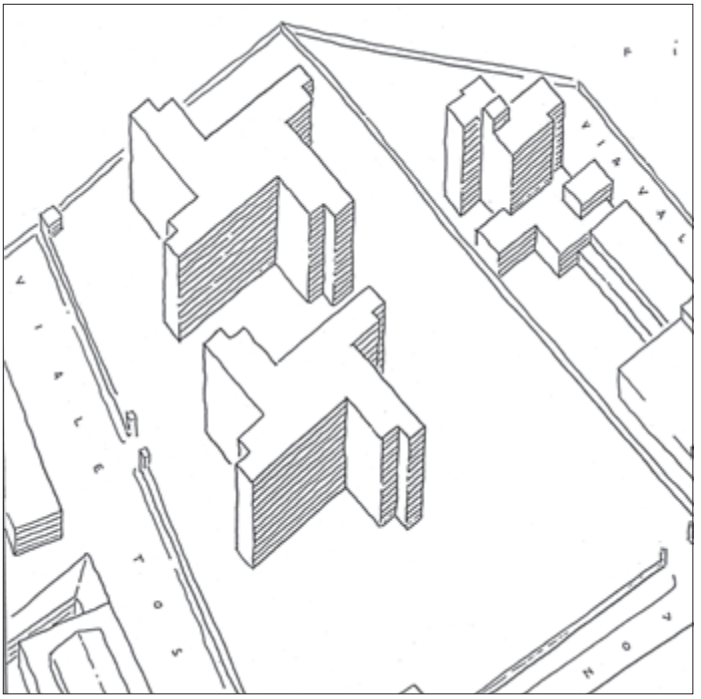
Modern "development programs" such as housing estates, shopping centers, and business parks are generally defined not by a vision of what a city wants to become but by established development, manufacturing, financial, and management patterns. They invariably consist of horizontal or vertical overconcentrations of a single use in one urban zone, in one building complex, or under one roof. The symbolic poverty of the majority of building operations today is the direct and logical result of programmed functional monotony.

The density, function, location, and, to a large extent, the form of these developments are decided before they land on the architect's drawing board. Many architects are well aware that it is the very nature of the programs that prevents them from designing true cities and villages. Individually, they are powerless to change these programs without risking loss of commissions and income.

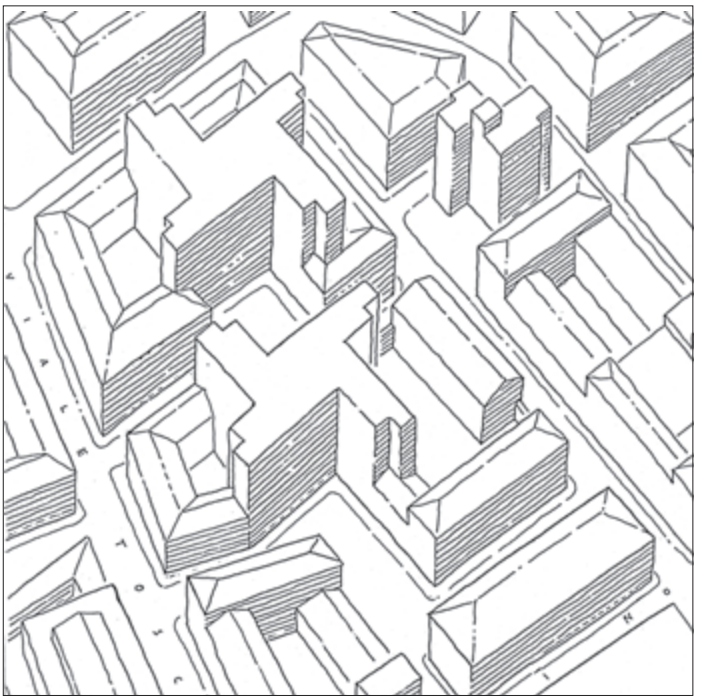


And so, functional uniformity forces on even the best architects a choice that is limited to either a sincere but cruel expression of uniformity or a formalistic variety that is always fake because it has no functional justification. Formal poverty or kitsch, abstraction or caricature, architectural anorexia and bulimia, are the inevitable and universally verifiable results. The symbolic richness of true urban architecture is based on the proximity of and dialogue between the greatest possible variety of private and public uses, and in the articulation of public spaces, urban fabric, and skyline.

If we want building sites of the future to contribute to the embellishment and improvement of cities, villages, and countryside, instead of adding to the general disorder, new masterplans must guide normal social and industrial activities to become the motors of urban redevelopment, to complete underdeveloped areas into true urban quarters and villages.



PROPOSAL FOR THE URBANIZATION OF THE "PALAZZO DELLA REGIONE" SITE



MASTERPLAN FOR FLORENCE-NOVOLI, L.K., 1993.

*Because of its recent industrial past, this northeast suburb of Florence has an extremely poor, labyrinthine street pattern. Its surface area exceeds that of the historic center and yet there is not a single public piazza! This rampant suburb is not only haphazard and chaotic in structure and appearance but it has no legible limits and its center is occupied by vast, disused factories. This masterplan (*piano guida*), which has been approved by all the local authorities involved at municipal, regional, and provincial levels, provides for the transformation of a suburban limbo into fourteen independent quarters. Standards and recommendations are few and rudimentary: the experience of the* piani regolatori *all over Italy over the past thirty years has shown that it is not the lack of regulations but their excessive complexity and sheer number which have led to the excesses and the abuses that are the norm.*

THE MASTERPLAN, A DEFINITION

The plan, the skyline, and the architecture of an urban quarter are regulated by the masterplan. This is not an architectural project, it is the prior condition for the integration of innumerable architectural projects into a coherent urban complex, the instrument that is necessary to maintain the harmony of the whole. It is much more than a technical tool; too many technically perfect masterplans during the postwar years led to the exact opposite. An excess of arbitrary regulations leads to tyranny and then to rejection. An excess of sophistication gives rise to innumerable (because unforeseeable) deviations. It is above all the philosophy, the end goal of a masterplan that counts; lack of a masterplan leads to monumental errors. It may be useful to recall some striking examples.

In the United States, the Loop, Chicago's business district, permits a built density that is the equivalent of the totality of office space needed for the whole country. In Italy, which has a total population of 57 million, all the city plans put together would allow for 180 million Italians to be housed in medium or low density developments. Again, in the United States, in 1935 the plot-ratio for the total built area granted for the city of New York was then already sufficient to house the population of the entire planet.

The masterplan is to the construction of a city what the constitution is to the life of a nation. It is much more than a specialized technical instrument and is the expression of an ethical and artistic vision. The masterplan represents the legislative form of such a vision; it is the geometric expression and the necessary complement of the law.

To guarantee its efficacy, the masterplan must have the rudimentary simplicity of moral precepts. It is divided into five parts:

1. A plan of the city, defining the size and form of its urban quarters and parks, and the network of major avenues, boulevards, and landscape corridors.

2. A plan of each quarter, defining the network of streets, squares, and blocks.

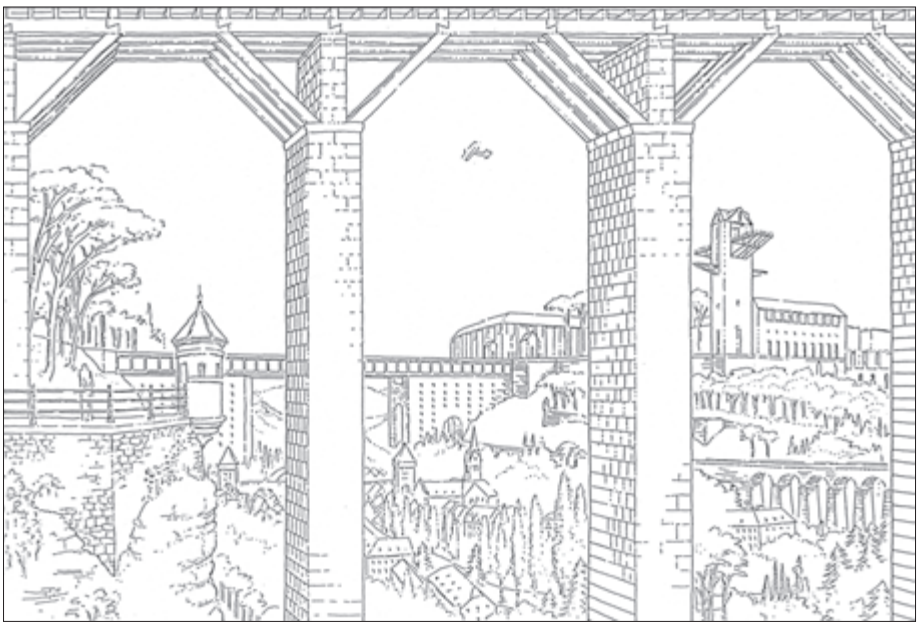
3. The form of individual plots on each urban block: number, shape, and use type and location of floors that can be built by plot.

4. The architectural code describing materials, technical configurations, proportions for external building elements (walls, roofs, windows, doors, porticoes, porches, garden walls, chimneys) and all built elements that are visible from public spaces.

NOUVELLE DIVISION DE
QUARTIER
1978
GRANDEUR MAXIMUM D'UN QUARTIER
33 HA
10'000 HABITANTS
AGRICULTURE
NON AEDIFICANDI
LES QUARTIERS DE L'EUROPE
LE PARC
LE CENTRE HISTORIQUE
WALDER
LES VALLÉES
LA GARE
HORTICULTURE
ROUTE DE FRANCE

5. A code for public spaces, defining the materials, configurations, techniques and designs for paving, street furniture, signage, lighting, and planting.

The aim of the codes is to improve the quality of normal, regular, and inevitable building, to create a "conventional" architecture of quality and encourage the routine realization of utilitarian buildings by way of long-established traditional building types, to reserve architectural expression and artistic rhetoric for the construction of public buildings and the embellishment of public spaces. Thus the masterplan has to ensure not only the harmonizing of often divergent interests but also the expression of the natural differences between private and public architecture. It is from this dialectic that the profound character of places worthy of the title "historic center" will one day spring.



THE NEW EUROPEAN QUARTERS IN LUXEMBOURG SEEN FROM THE PFAFFENTHAL, COUNTER PROJECT, L.K., 1978.
The extraordinary geographical situation of Luxembourg city, forming an archipelago of independent quarters separated by deep gorges and valleys, constitutes a de facto demonstration of the "cities within the city" approach. The non-aedificandi areas are taken up by forests, agriculture, and horticulture and are crisscrossed by a dense network of walks and bridle paths.

GEORGETOWN, A NEW TOWN AT CORBEANCA COMMUNE, ILFOV COUNTY, ROMANIA
DEVELOPERS: RUPECO ENTERPRISES SRL,
ARCHITECTS & PLANNERS: LK and JAMSHID SEPEHRI, SAMIR YOUNES, MEHRDAD RAHBAR

THE COMPLETION OF SANTURCE, L.K., 1988.

This preliminary study for a masterplan for the largest borough of San Juan, Puerto Rico, was commissioned by Senator Victoria Muñoz-Mendoza. It outlines methodology for completing and urbanizing 27 degraded urban quarters of Santurce and includes the creation of 27 new central squares to give identity and symbolic independence to each quarter. Independent utilities and infrastructure are provided for each quarter to insure its functional independence.

PUBLIC SPACE = 80% of total URBAN LAND

EXISTING BUILDING STRUCTURE

LUIS LLORENS TORRES QUARTER, SANTURCE.

The existing suburban public housing scheme consists of badly designed blocks and wasteland. The project proposes a radical reduction in public spaces from 80% to 32% of the total surface area. The privatized areas are divided into traditionally-sized urban plots adjusted to existing building types. All ground floors can be used for non-residential uses. New two-to-three-story-high buildings are designed and located in a way that completes the restructured urban blocks.

New PUBLIC or PRIVATE LOTS

NEW PRIVATE BUILDINGS and GARDENS
NEW PUBLIC BUILDINGS

PUBLIC SPACE = 32% of total URBAN LAND

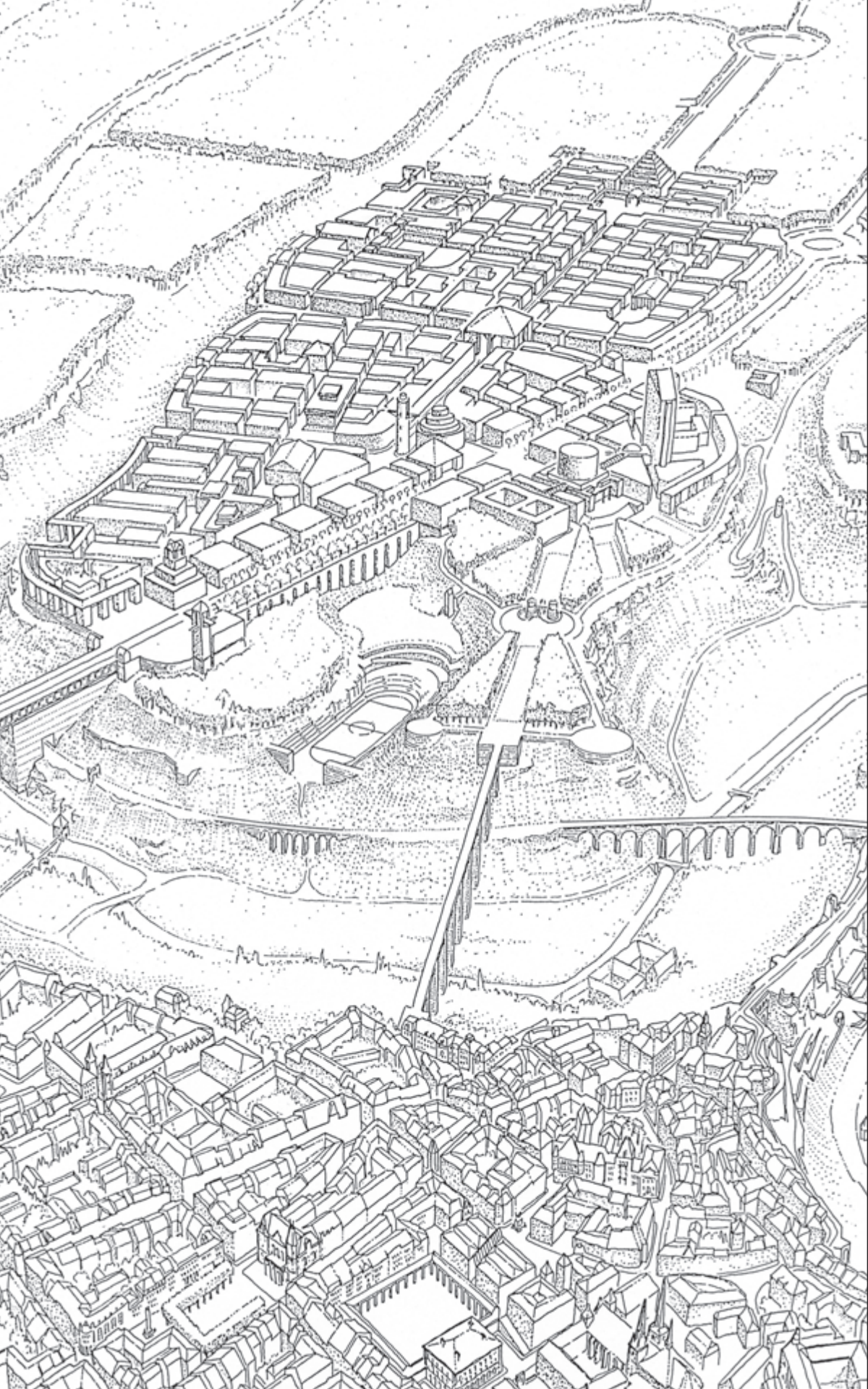
PROPOSED BLOCK – STRUCTURE INTEGRATING EXISTING with NEW buildings

THE MASTERPLAN, A TOOL OF PUBLIC INTEREST

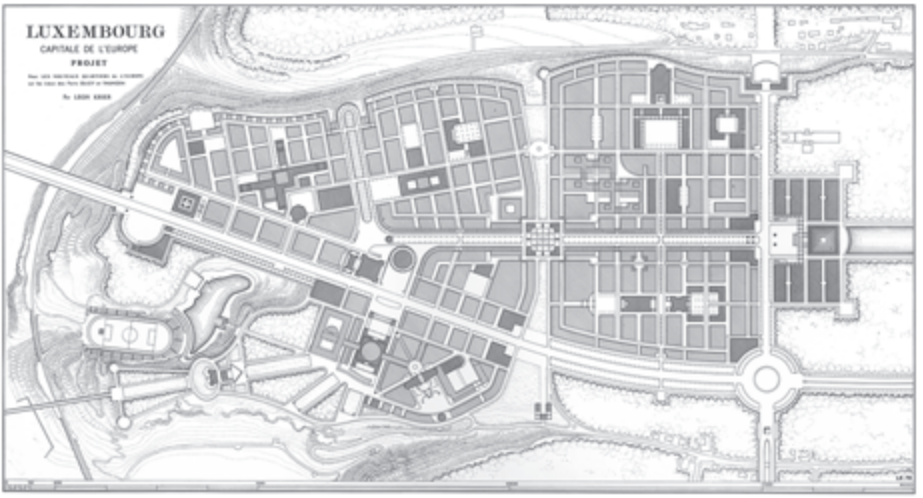
In Europe, public authorities have for a decade now almost completely abandoned their role as clients in the fields of architecture and urban planning; even in France, the "*grands travaux*" are limited to prestige projects.

If the market economy shapes our environment the first question is whether and how it can produce a true public realm. Indeed, it may well be that the majority of buildings put up by a market economy will in the future be a succession of gated private precincts with limited public access such as shopping malls, schools, condominiums, housing estates, and traffic infrastructure (highways, stations, airports). Secondly, can major public spaces such as streets, squares, and parks, which have developed and matured so organically over the centuries that their existence has become second nature for most Europeans, survive in a market economy that is by nature not primarily motivated by the general interest but by the welfare of private property and the quality of their returns? It is everywhere evident that private developers, private foundations, and private interest groups, however well-intentioned, are incapable of building and preserving public spaces that are in any way the equal of European historic centers. Although commerce is an essential and constituent part of public space, good public space is not a mere by-product of commerce. The establishment and maintenance of true public space is first of all a matter of general interest, of communal life and citizenship. In the United States the creation of public space is increasingly left to the private sector; as a result federal revenues that should be used to generate and maintain public space are diverted from this civilizing role and instead wasted in the quicksand of the welfare bureaucracy.

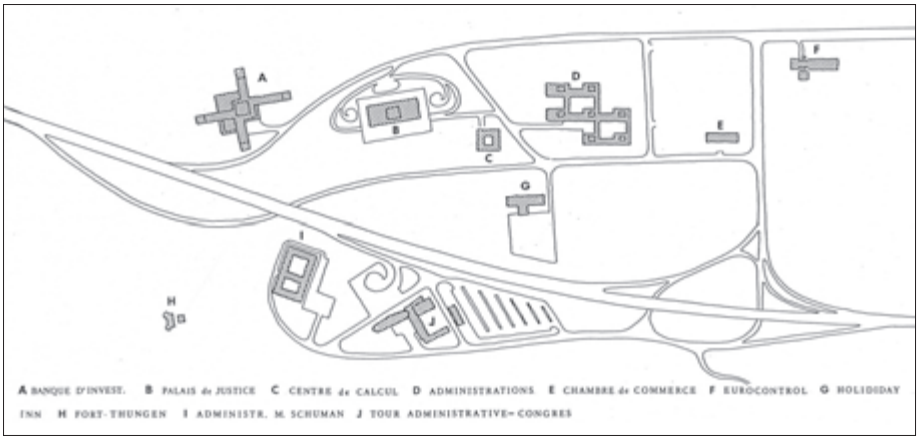
In totalitarian regimes, on the other hand, the hypertrophy of the public sector, to the detriment of the private sector, has led to a dilution of the very concept of public space. What private developers are primarily interested in is the commercial aspect of public space. They are, therefore, unsuitable as legislators or creators of masterplans for large urban areas. And yet this is the modus operandi that is becoming the norm in all developed countries. Masterplanning is a legislative and constitutional matter. Architects and planners working for private land developers are necessarily serving private interests; in this dependence they cannot truly act as public legislators. Technically speaking, and in accordance with the full meaning of the title, the author of a masterplan has to have the independence of a legislator, his loyalty being to the public interest and not to the interests of private shareholders alone.



If free market mechanisms on one hand, and state centralism on the other, have both proved incapable of creating a true public realm one has to conclude that public authorities may be best advised to commission masterplans from independent agents. To summarize: a masterplan must be a three-dimensional synthesis, a legislative and public framework for the optimum development of private self-interests and autonomy. It must establish the geographical, ecological, social, and volumetric limits beyond which settlements should not grow.



MASTERPLAN FOR THE URBANIZATION OF THE SITE OF THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS, PLATEAU KIRCHBERG, LUXEMBOURG, L.K. 1978.
This counter-project, drafted between 1974 and 1978 to demonstrate the devastating effects of mono-functional zoning (Plan Vago) on the city of Luxembourg, provided for a considerable reduction in buildable areas in the city-region and for the creation of twenty-seven autonomous quarters of not more than 33 hectares each (the size of the historic center). The plan also prohibited area zoning in order to promote the internal growth and completion of each urban quarter, notably Kirchberg, which is illustrated here.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GEORGETOWN, A NEW TOWN AT CORBEANCA COMMUNE, ILFOV COUNTY, ROMANIA
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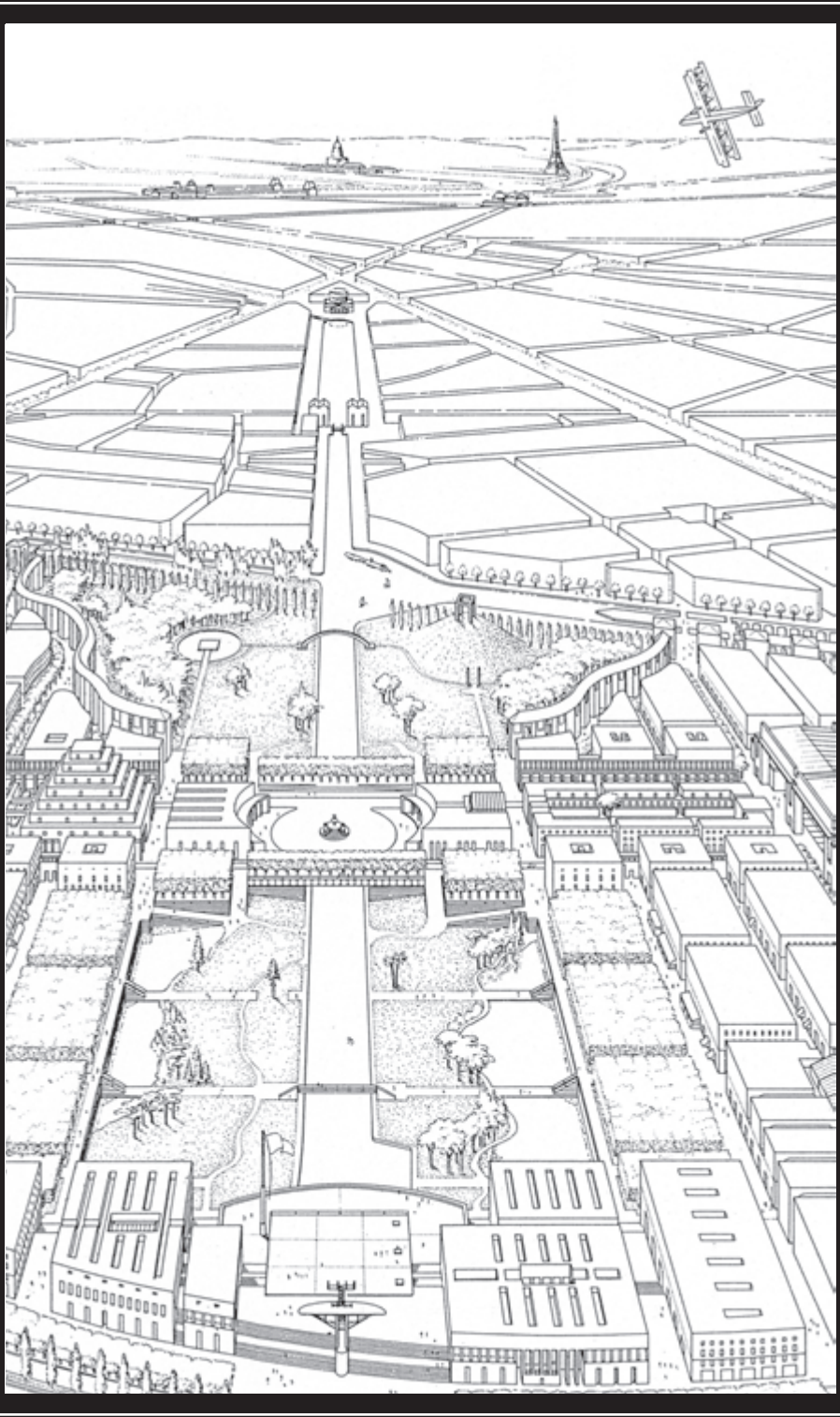
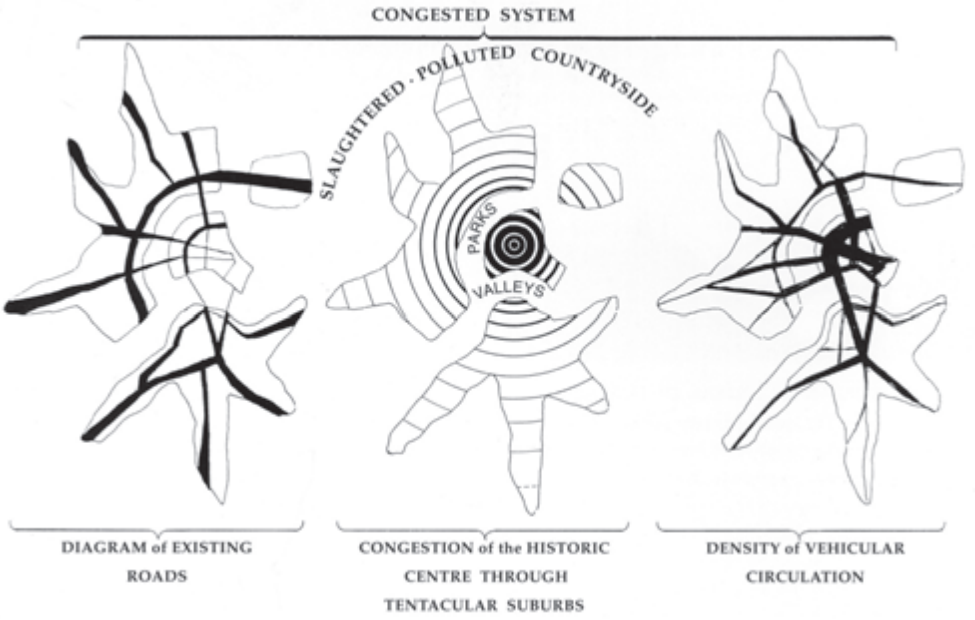


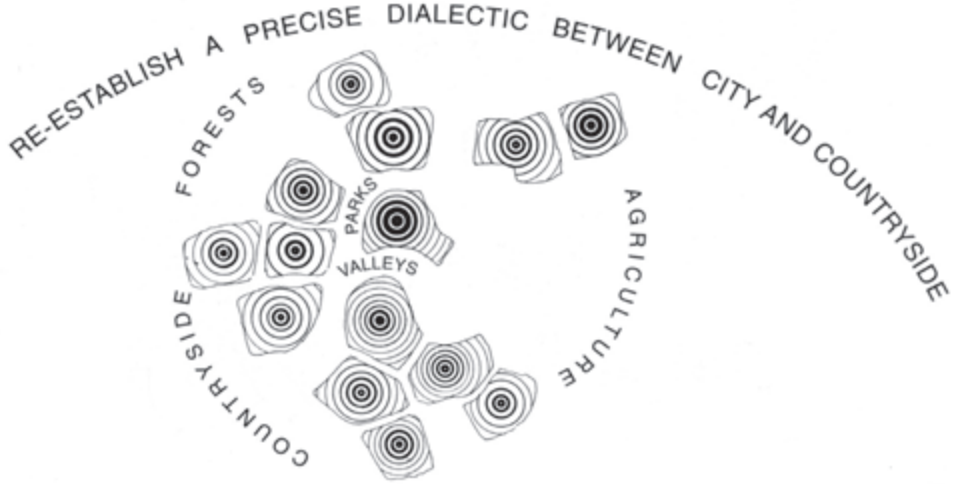
CHAPTER V

THE POLYCENTRIC CITY OF URBAN COMMUNITIES



THE

CITIES WITHIN THE CITY



THE PERIPHERY HAS TO BE TRANSFORMED INTO
MANY
AUTONOMOUS CITIES

CITIES WITHIN THE CITY

STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS
urban quarter • borough • city • metropolis

CITY AND LANDSCAPE

SUSTAINABILITY

STRUCTURE AND FORM OF THE URBAN QUARTER
size • plan • skyline

GEOMETRY OF URBAN PATTERNS

SITING OF BUILDINGS
ON SQUARES, STREETS, AND BLOCKS

TYPE, SHAPE AND CHARACTER OF URBAN SPACES

SINGLE-LOT BLOCKS • MULTI-LOT BLOCKS
AND THEIR ARCHITECTURE

HIERARCHY OF PUBLIC SPACES
AND CIRCULATION HIERARCHY

THE POLYCENTRIC ZONING OF FUNCTIONS

BUILDING HEIGHTS

IN PRAISE OF TOWERS

CRITICAL PROBLEMS OF PLOT-RATIOS

ARTIFICIAL LIGHTING OF PUBLIC SPACES

CITIES WITHIN THE CITY

It is too often forgotten in our countries that cities and the countryside are not transformed by chaotic, uncontrolled, and uncontrollable activity but rather by political, legislative, and other decisions that determine residential densities, zoning, land use, built floor areas and heights, as well as the shape, appearance, and ultimately the significance of buildings. The structure and appearance of cities and countryside are largely the result of ideas and choices. Even on such a scale, reversibility is possible. The widespread cynicism in this matter, a consequence of having left such major matters to fate, does not absolve us from our commitments and responsibilities. It can no longer be a matter for specialists alone but must be one of democratic choices and decisions.

Town and countryside are antithetical concepts. Like every natural organism, a town must have defined limits: it must have a maximum and minimum size in terms of area and volume, plan and skyline, and in terms of the number of inhabitants and activities that it can house. Exactly like an individual who has reached maturity, a "mature" city cannot grow bigger or spread out (vertically or horizontally) without losing its essential quality. Just like a family of individuals, a city can grow only by reproduction and multiplication, that is, by becoming polycentric and polynuclear.

The foundational building block of the polycentric city is the autonomous urban quarter, a true city within a city.

STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS
urban quarter · borough · city · metropolis

The urban quarter is the built expression of a community of collective and individual self-interests. It is the basic component of every true city. As it is a city within the city and, as such, is largely self-sufficient, it is also a member of an extended family of borough, city, and, finally, metropolis. It is a geographical center of defined size that comprises all urban activities, functions and uses, both regular and irregular, public and private, commercial, manufacturing, residential, educational, and recreational.

- An urban quarter is autonomous with respect to kindergartens and primary schools, daily grocery shopping and markets, and also in terms of employment (at least one and at most two jobs per dwelling), health services, and cultural activities.

- A maximum of four neighborhoods forms a borough.

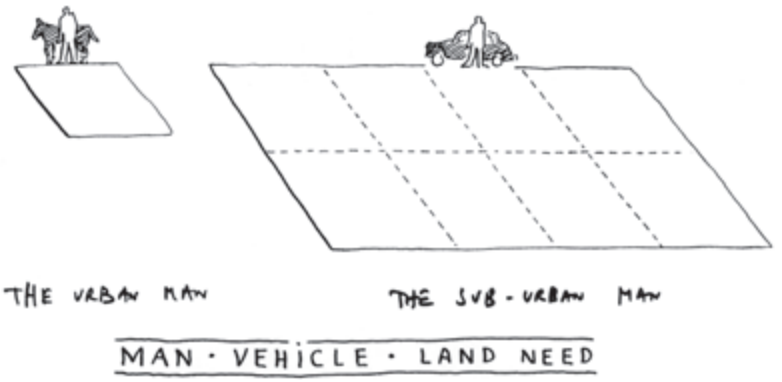
- An urban borough is autonomous with respect to secondary schools, weekly grocery shopping and markets, and administration, services, and culture at the local level.

- A certain number of boroughs constitute a city.

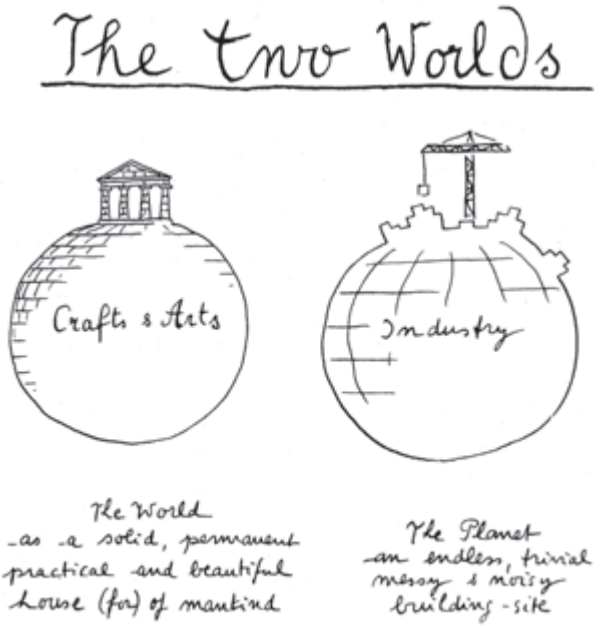
- A city is autonomous for monthly and seasonal shopping, and also in terms of administration, sport, services, culture, and leisure activities at a regional level.

- A certain number of cities form an autonomous metropolis or "polypolis" of national or continental importance.

CITY AND LANDSCAPE



Regions, countries, continents have a limited carrying capacity. The more humans the planet is carrying now, says Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, the less it will be able to house in the future. Human intelligence is a limited resource. It cannot solve problems caused by ignoring fundamentals of existence. "Fixed Energy" cannot be turned into "Free Energy" anymore than stone into bread. The more we use today the less will be available tomorrow. We should not burden or trust coming generations with resolving what we collectively refuse to face now.

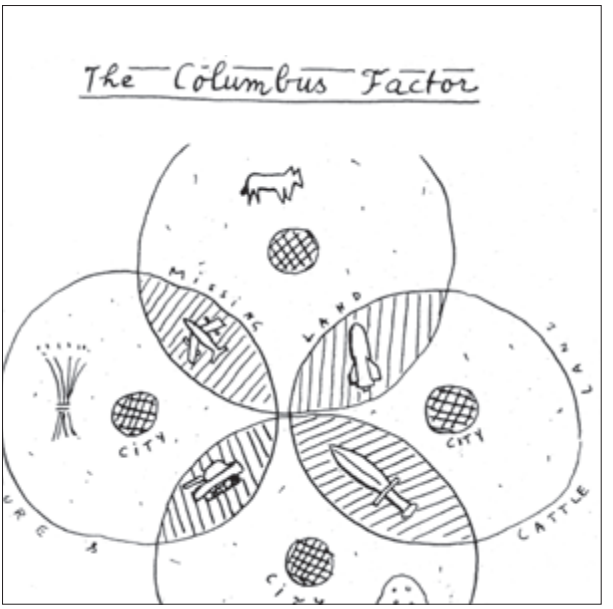


SUSTAINABILITY

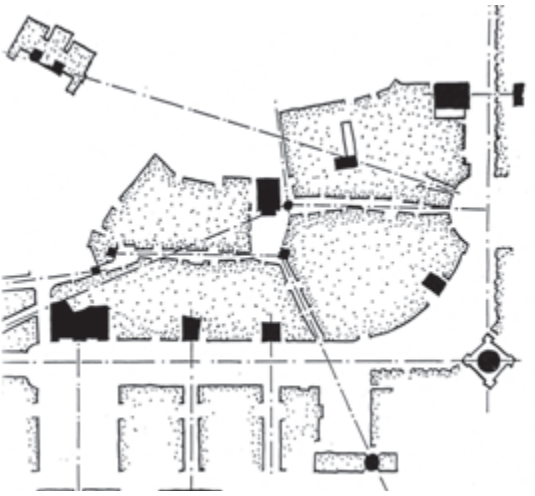
Nowadays the term is used in an unsustainable way. Sustainable development or city is a powerful myth with a little reality. In fact there exist no reliable concepts of sustainable city that would be generalizeable yet. There are only hypotheses of a partial nature. We are still far removed from a global ecological project, the one helping to make intelligent political decisions. The question that will impose itself over the next years will be "What can be our moral political and technological value systems in conditions of limited 'free energy' resources?" For the time being the abuse of the term "sustainable" erodes its social and political persuasiveness and postpones the advent of eventual solutions.

A CITY NEEDS APPROXIMATELY SO MUCH LAND FOR ITS NUTRITION

FOR WHATEVER LAND DEFICIT AN INCREASED POPULATION HAS IT WILL BE FORCED TO REDUCE ITS NUMBERS, OR ALTERNATIVELY GO TO WAR, INVADE, CONQUER AND SUBJUGATE FAR LANDS, CONTINENTS, AND PEOPLE.



'X' NUMBER OF CITIES NEED 'X' TIMES MORE LAND FOR NUTRITION



Main urban vistas and location of important Public Buildings

*NEW URBAN QUARTERS OF VENTA-BERRI, SAN SEBASTIAN, LÉON and ROB KRIER, 1990. This urban district, planned and approved with abstruse bureaucratic complications and then annulled by the same authorities to be replaced by standard cloned "*ensanche*" blocks.*

Town Hall and Central Square at the intersection of four Quarters

Local Squares at the center of each Quarter

Pedestrian spaces: Parks, Streets, and Squares

Gardens, Tree-Shaded Squares, and Public Parks

Hierarchy of Circulation Networks

Building blocks of varying sizes form a dense street pattern around the Central Square and High Street

NEW URBAN QUARTERS OF VENTA-BERRI, SAN SEBASTIAN, LÉON and ROB KRIER, 1990.

STRUCTURE AND FORM OF THE URBAN QUARTER
size · plan · skyline

THE FIRST OBJECTIVE OF ECOLOGICAL URBAN DEVELOPMENT MUST BE TO SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE THE NUMBER OF MILES TRAVELED PER PERSON PER DAY BETWEEN WORKPLACE, HOME, SCHOOL, SHOPS, AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES.

In this optic, the size of a quarter is defined by the daily pedestrian capacity, for the pedestrian must have access to all the usual daily and weekly urban functions within ten minutes' walking distance, without recourse to vehicular transport. The area thus covered has a diameter of 500 (1,600 feet) to 600 m (1,900 feet) and an area of some 75 to 100 acres (30–40 ha.).

- An urban quarter should be rounded in shape and should not sprawl nor splash. It should never extend more than 900 m (2,900 feet) in any direction.

- It ought not to exceed a total of 10,000 inhabitants and users.

- It must be organized in a clear hierarchy of streets and squares, which should form a regular grid (classical), an irregular grid (–ernacular), or a coherent mixture of both.

- The urban quality of a quarter does not depend solely on the density of its

activities or the volume of its buildings. It varies considerably with the number of streets, squares, and blocks into which it is organized.

- The surface area of urban blocks decreases toward the center and is larger near the perimeter of a quarter, thus creating a denser street network around the central square to generate a feeling of centrality and transparency by increasing the number of street corners, shop frontages, entrance doors, openings, etc.

- Oblong blocks are perpendicular to the direction of the high street so that the latter is irrigated by a maximum number of side streets.

- Each quarter has at least one central square and one high street that forms the backbone of a network of streets and squares.

- The efficiency and richness of a street network can be measured by the number of T-junctions and crossroads. The number of street corners is an indicator of urbanity; the number of cul-de-sacs is an indicator of the absence of urbanity, hence of sub-urbanity.

- Cul-de-sacs and one-way streets should be avoided at all costs, save in exceptional topographical situations: promontories, peninsulas, etc. The former create holes and the latter blockages in the street network making orientation and the absorption of all types of traffic difficult, thus overloading the rest of the network through increased congestion leading to gridlock.

- In general the feeling of security in public spaces increases with the circulatory efficiency and density of the street pattern.

- Parkways, boulevards, avenues, large squares, glacis, public gardens, fairgrounds, and golf courses should not be located inside urban quarters but form their boundaries.

The boundary of a quarter is not a mere administrative line. It is a morphological constituent of the urban fabric: a boulevard, an avenue, a parkway, a park, a promenade that articulates natural or man-made topographical features such as a river, lake, canal, stream, forest, natural incline, motorway, or railway. In general, town boundaries should consist of promenades with good connections to paths and tracks suitable for walks into the surrounding countryside without recourse to vehicular roads. Flattening hills, filling-in valleys, and reducing inclines should all be avoided. The distinctive characteristics of a site should, on the contrary, be enhanced; urban plans and skylines should take advantage of the specific nature of the topography.

The CITY as COMMUNITY(IES)

CULTURAL, POLITICAL, ECONOMICAL

RELIGIOUS ⇒ RELIGATA

The CITY

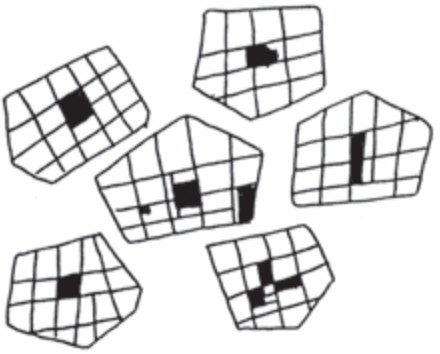
COMMUNITY
CIVITAS
PARISH
etc

MONO-CENTRIC

10 MINUTES

The BIG CITY

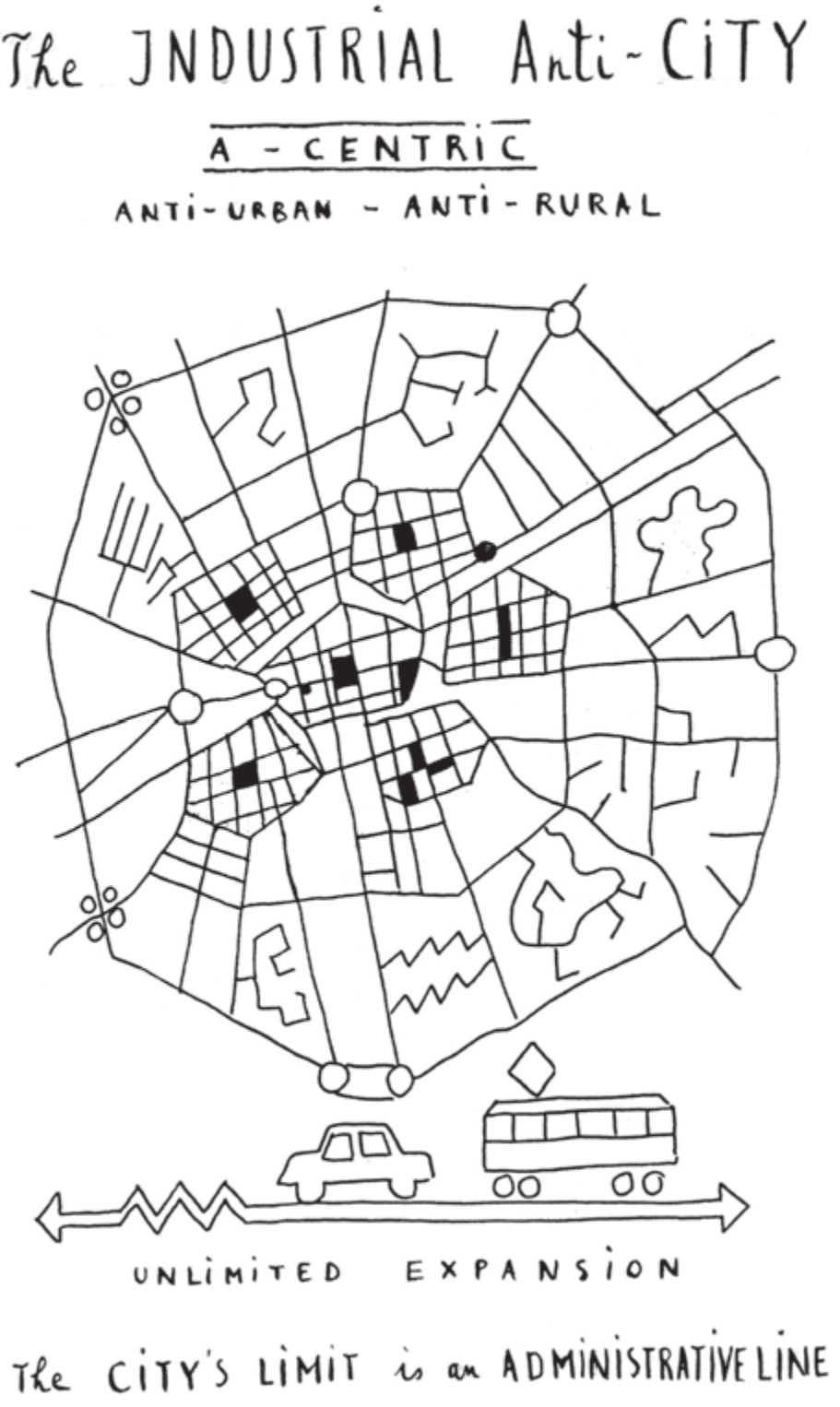
FEDERATION
of COMMUNITIES etc



POLY-CENTRIC

$\mathcal{N}$ x 10 MINUTES

The CITY'S LIMIT is a BUILT one


The INDUSTRIAL Anti-CITY
A-CENTRIC
ANTI-URBAN - ANTI-RURAL
UNLIMITED EXPANSION
The CITY'S LIMIT is an ADMINISTRATIVE LINE

GEOMETRY OF URBAN PATTERNS

In Europe, urban networks are generally defined by two distinct geometric systems. The most widespread system consists of streets and squares that are not parallel – that is, widths, heights, and lengths vary with what Le Corbusier dubbed "the free geometry of the donkey's path." This system espouses the configurations of a site as if it had grown there organically. I call it "vernacular networking."

The second system consists of parallel alignments, simple and geometrically shaped patterns of streets and squares artificially imposed upon the countryside and cities, often in direct conflict with geography and topography. This system is characteristic of planned cities and villages, whereas the former largely corresponds to spontaneous ensembles, villages, and hamlets. We call it "euclidean geometry," I call it "classical networking." In fact, straight lines and simple geometric shapes have, for a long time, been perceived as the expression of reason, efficiency, progress, and aesthetics – in a word, civilization.

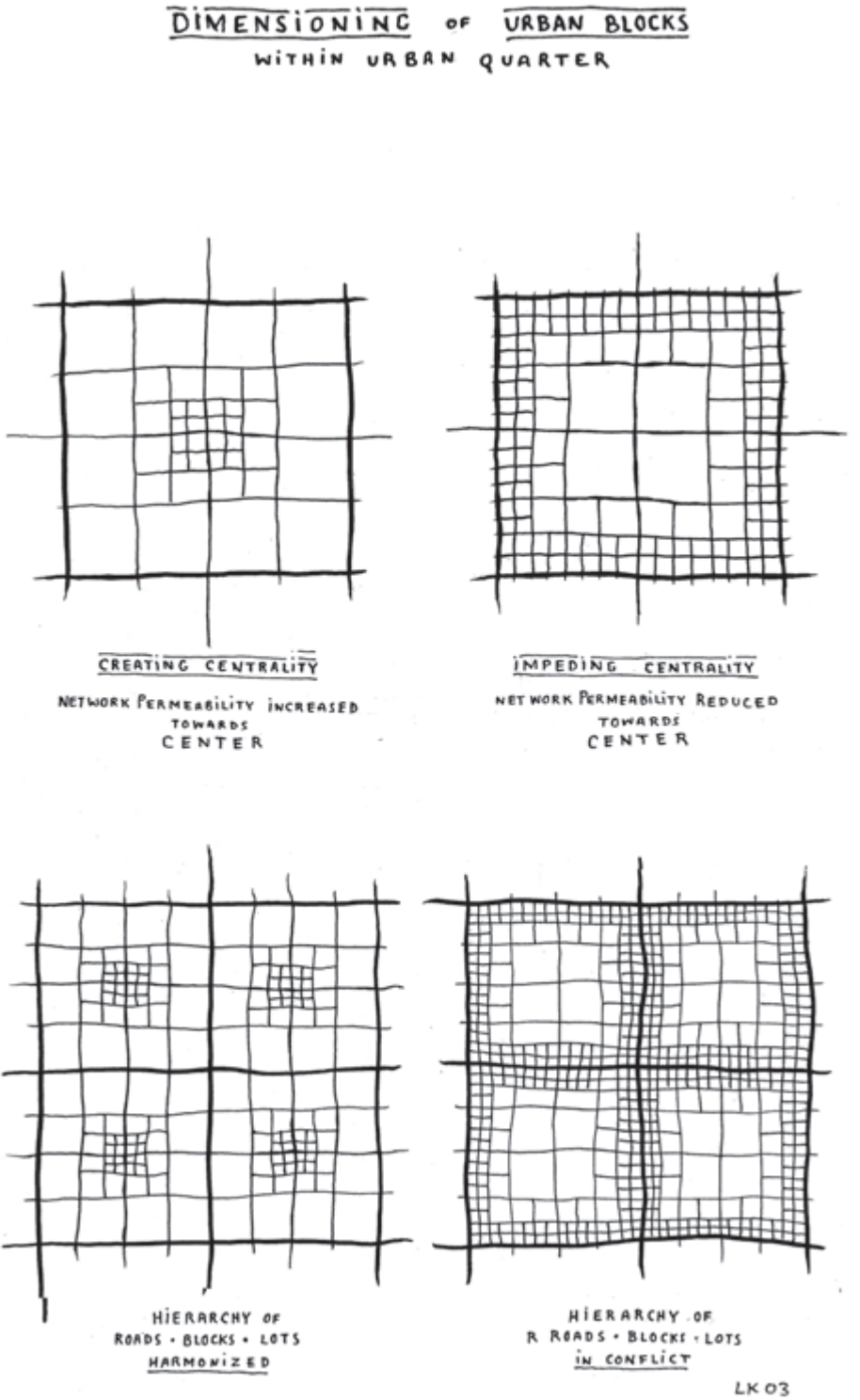
This is not necessarily the case today: too often rudimentary patterns have been imposed with no consideration whatsoever for natural conditions, resulting in the correction of river beds, removal of hills, and filling-in of valleys.

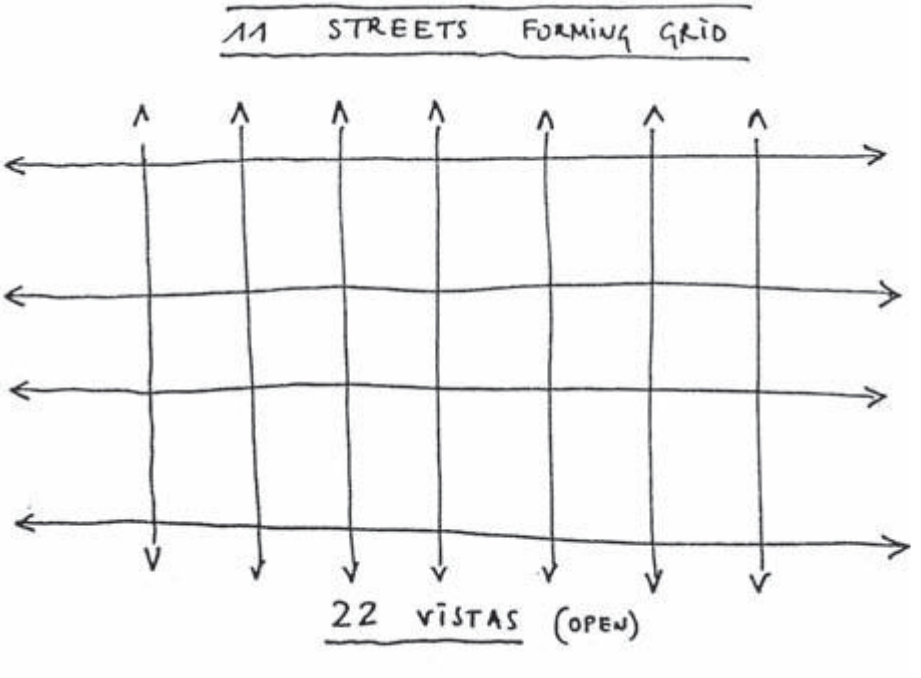
With the discovery of chaos theory and fractal geometry there is now general acceptance of the idea that pure mathematics and basic geometry (formulae and shapes) do not hold the monopoly of logic, order, and beauty. Modern mathematical theory allows us to understand the logical structure and rationality of extremely complex forms and figures.

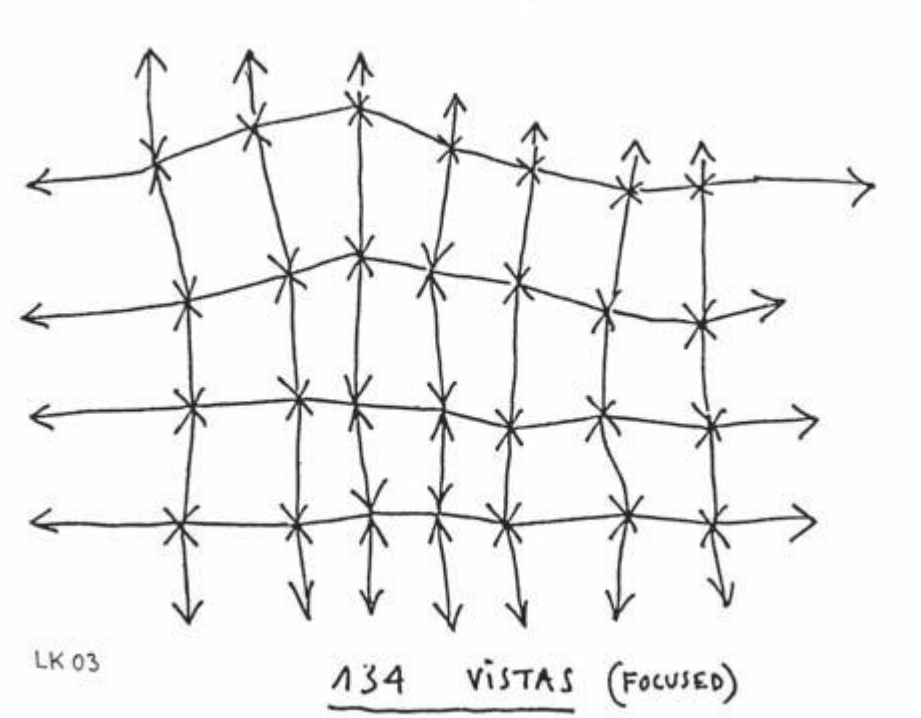
Depending on the lay of the land, an S-bend may be a more efficient way of linking A to B than a straight line. What is more, it is indisputable that the perfectly straight line and right angle are philosophical abstractions, which, in the real world, exist only in the form of practical approximations.

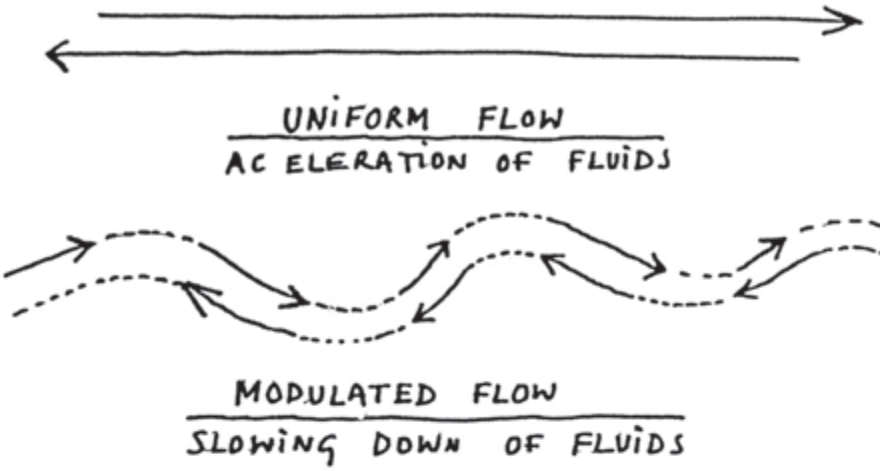
We are now able to understand that the irregular grids of the so-called "spontaneous ensembles" often result from settlement processes that are both practical and voluntary, rational as well as logical.

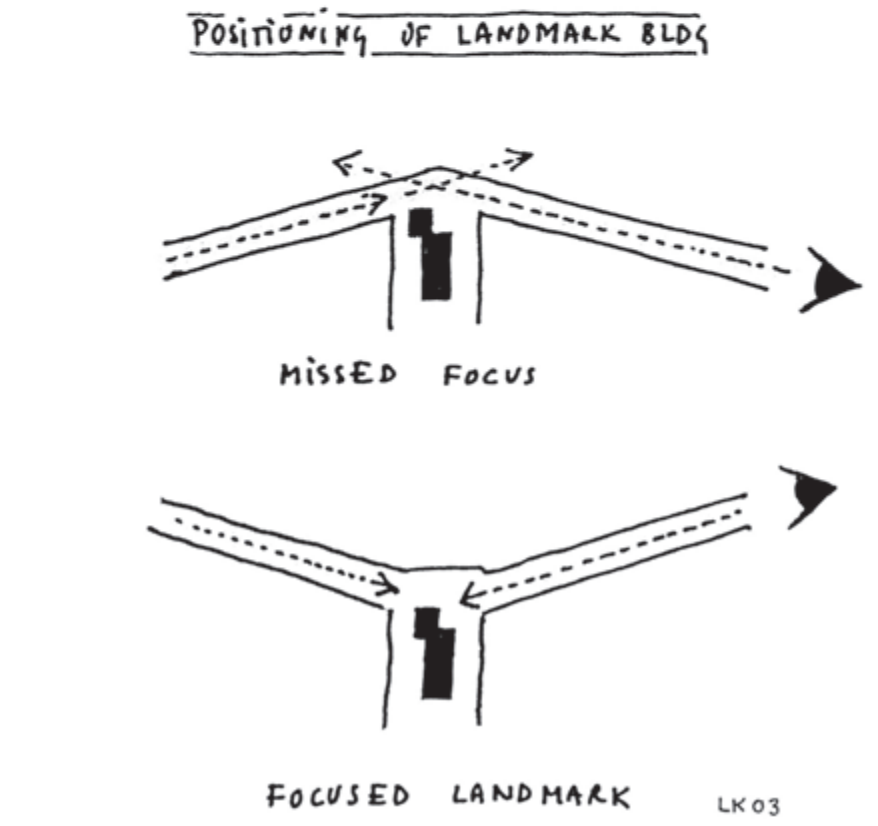
When designing groups of buildings and cities we should see regular and irregular systems no longer as contradictory principles but as complementary methods, which, depending on ground conditions, have their own use and raison d'être.

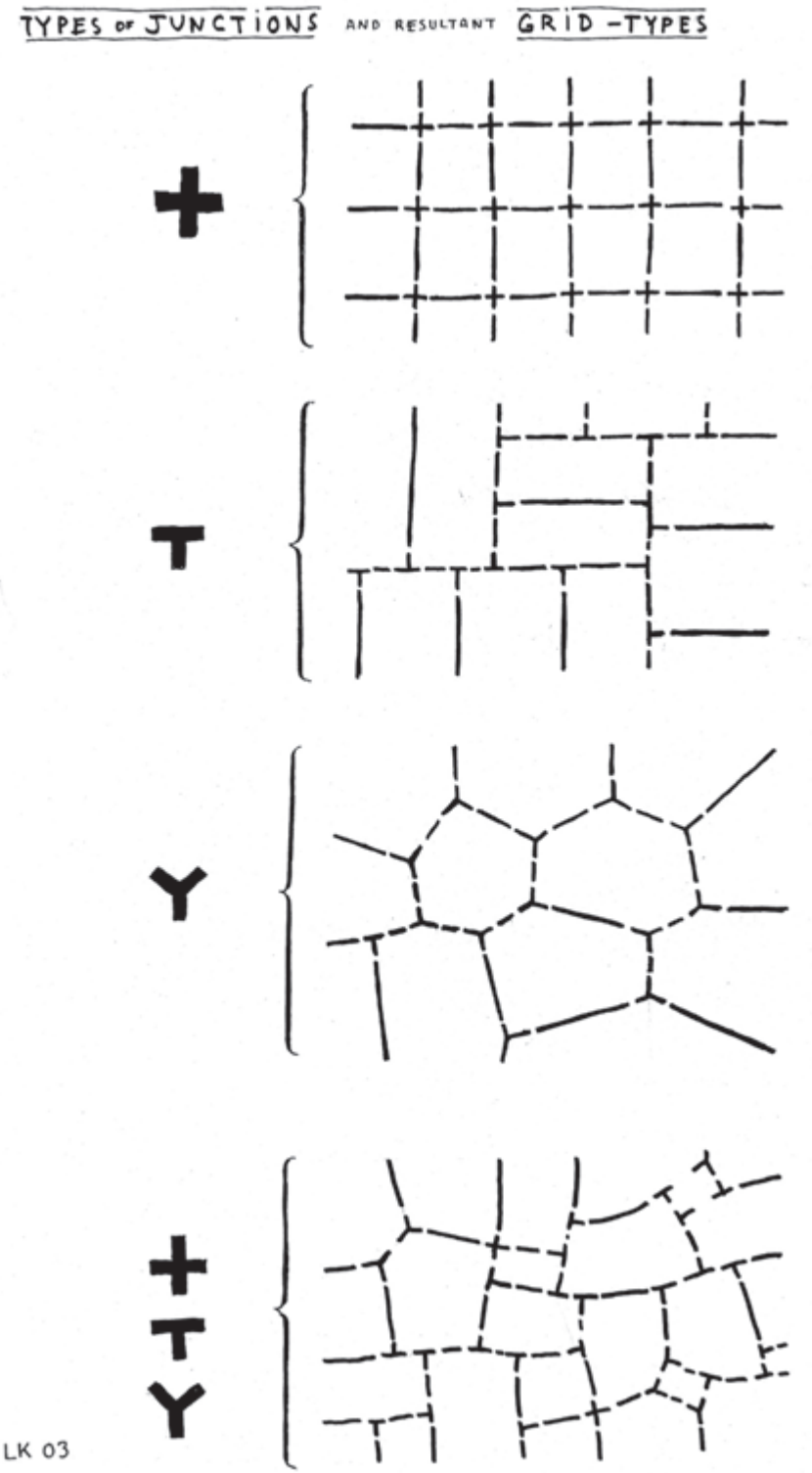

DIMENSIONING OF URBAN BLOCKS
WITHIN URBAN QUARTER
CREATING CENTRALITY
NETWORK PERMEABILITY INCREASED TOWARDS CENTER
IMPEDING CENTRALITY
NETWORK PERMEABILITY REDUCED TOWARDS CENTER
HIERARCHY OF ROADS + BLOCKS + LOTS HARMONIZED
HIERARCHY OF R ROADS + BLOCKS + LOTS IN CONFLICT
LK 03

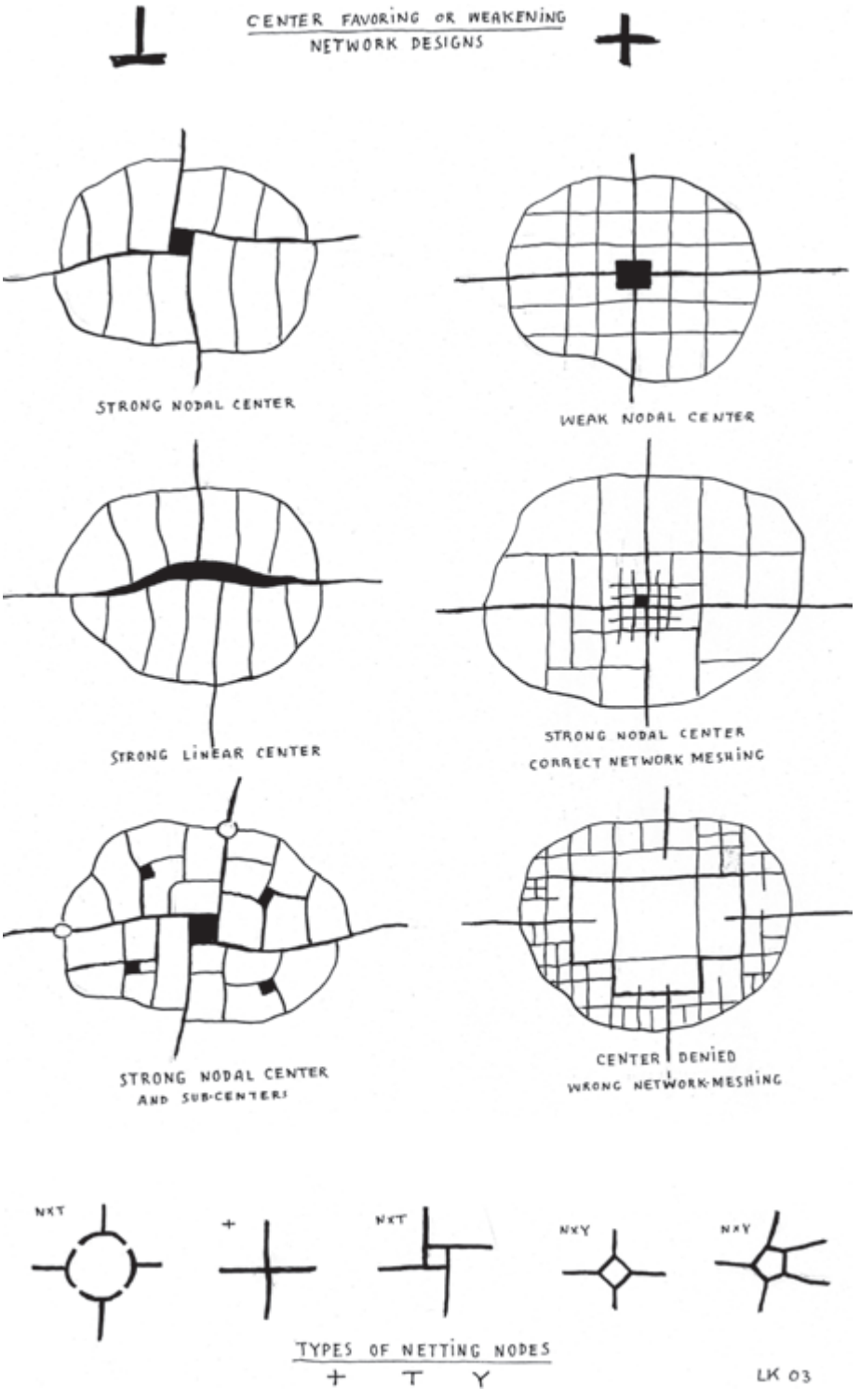

11 STREETS FORMING GRID
22 VISTAS (OPEN)

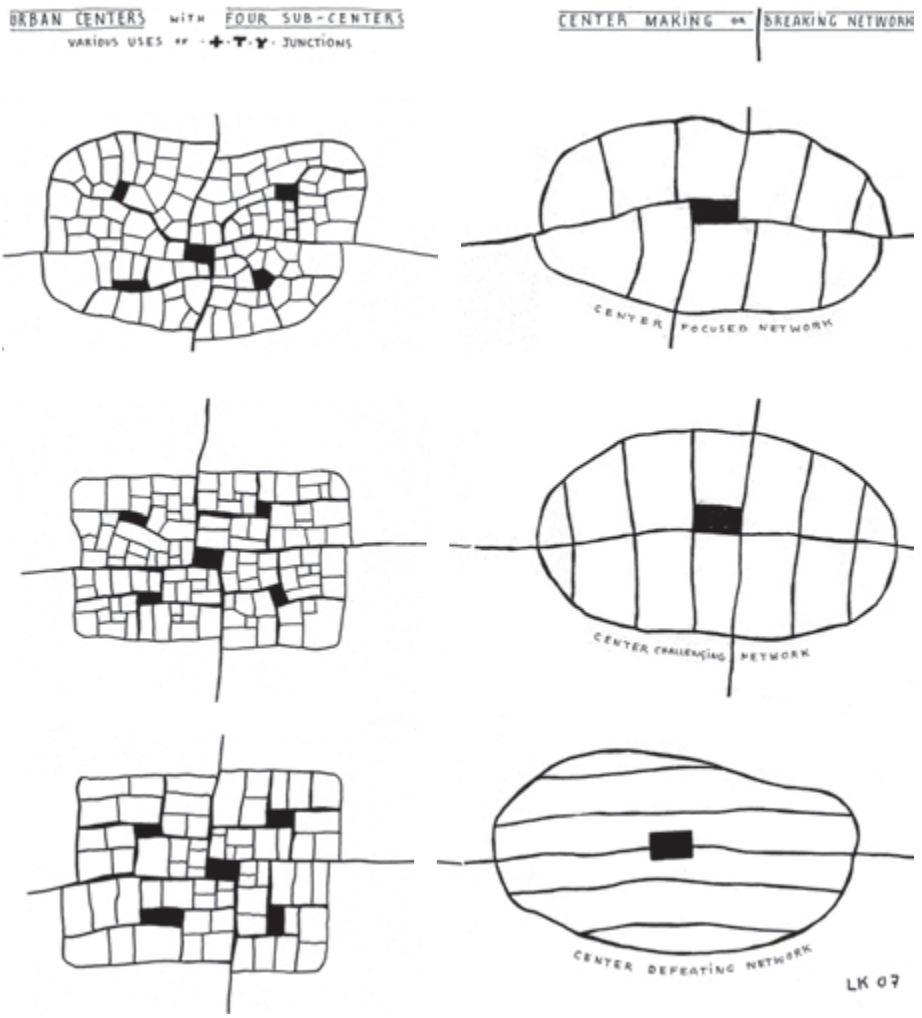

LK 03
134 VISTAS (FOCUSED)

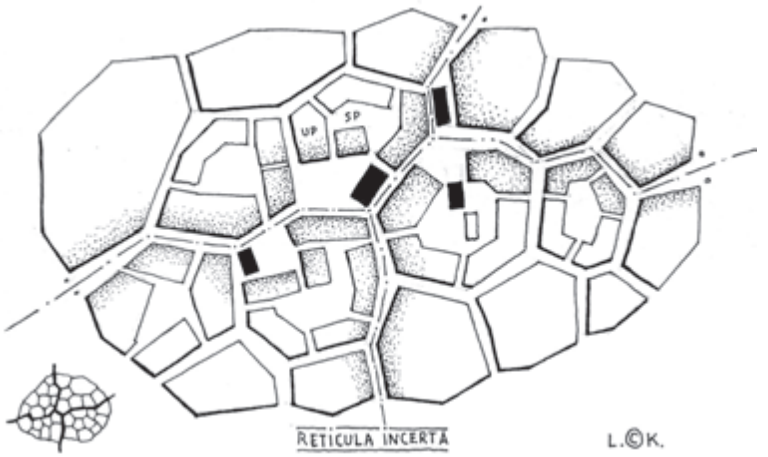

UNIFORM FLOW
ACCELERATION OF FLUIDS
MODULATED FLOW
SLOWING DOWN OF FLUIDS


POSITIONING OF LANDMARK BLDG
MISSED FOCUS
FOCUSED LANDMARK
LK03

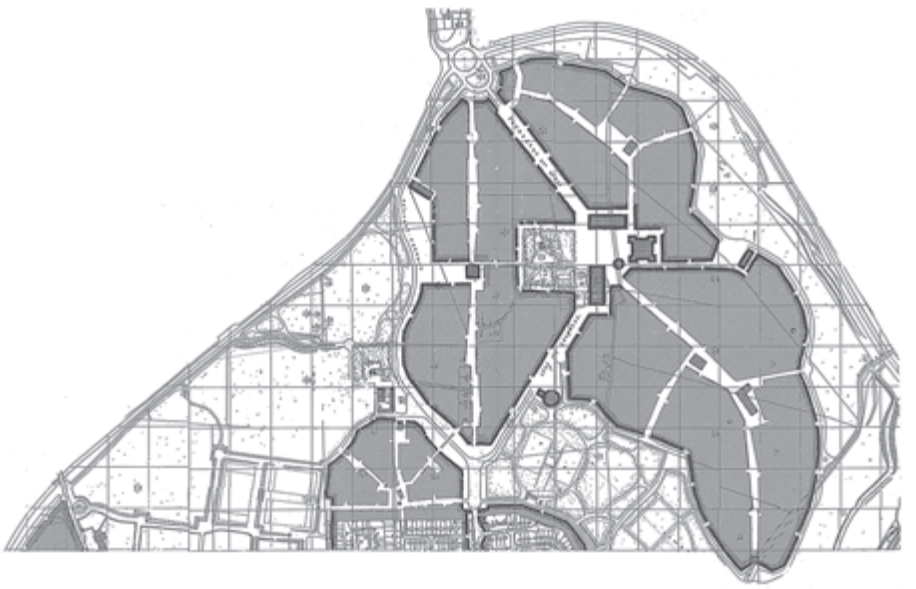

TYPES OF JUNCTIONS AND RESULTANT GRID-TYPES
LK 03


CENTER FAVORING OR WEAKENING
NETWORK DESIGNS
STRONG NODAL CENTER
WEAK NODAL CENTER
STRONG LINEAR CENTER
STRONG NODAL CENTER
CORRECT NETWORK MESHING
STRONG NODAL CENTER
AND SUB-CENTERS
CENTER DENIED
WRONG NETWORK-MESHING
NXT
+
NXT
NXY
NXY
TYPES OF NETTING NODES
+ T Y
LK 03

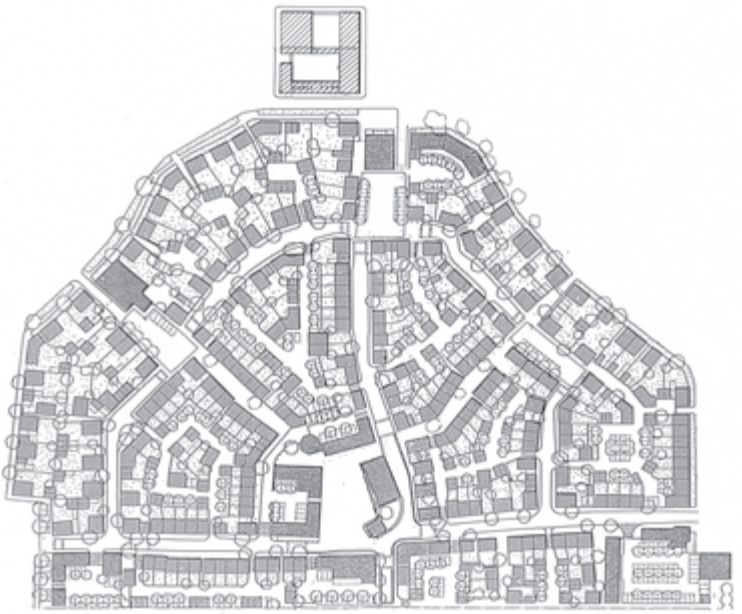

URBAN CENTERS WITH FOUR SUB-CENTERS
VARIOUS USES OF + T Y JUNCTIONS
CENTER MAKING OR BREAKING NETWORK
CENTER FOCUSED NETWORK
CENTER CHALLENGING NETWORK
CENTER DEFEATING NETWORK
LK 07

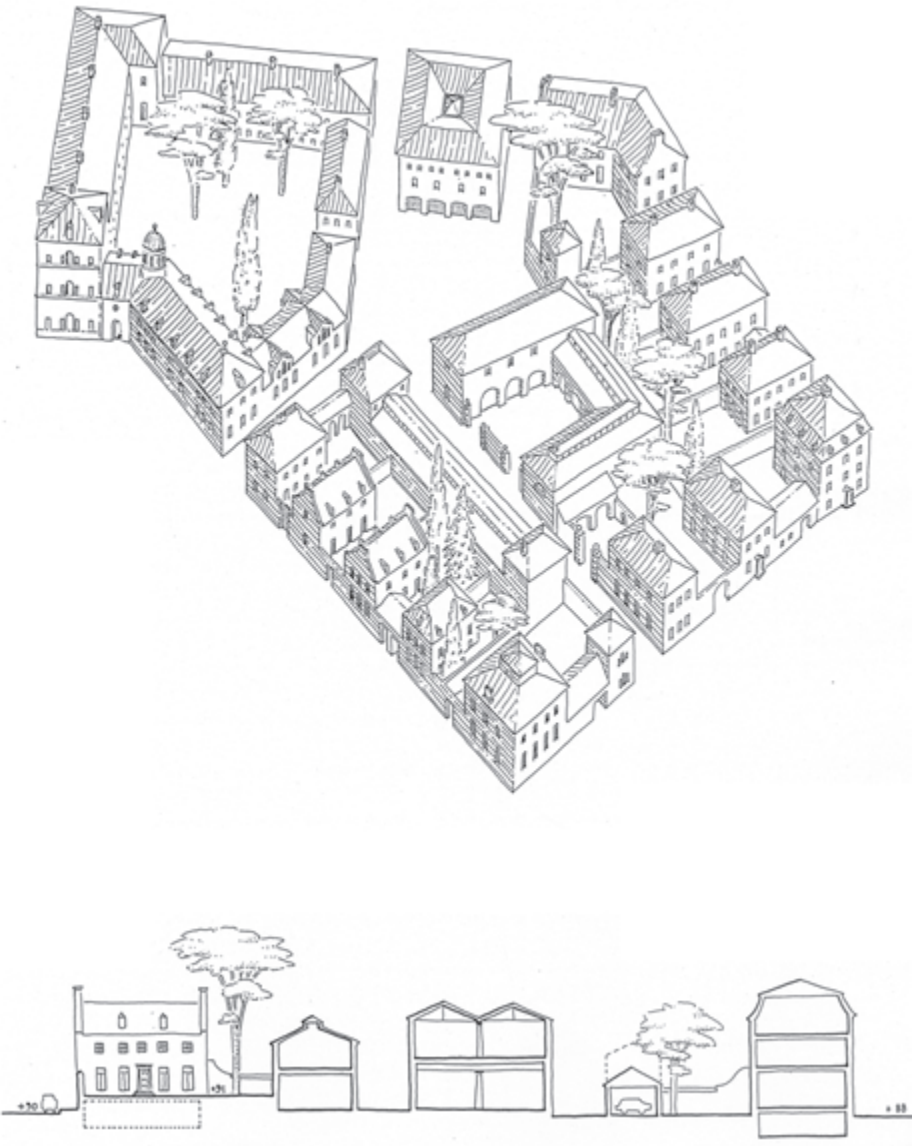

UP
SP
RETICULA INCERTA
L.©K.

NEW TOWN OF POUNDBURY, DORSET, L.K. with LIAM O'CONNOR, 1989.
Below: General masterplan of the four new urban quarters. Each new urban quarter has its own high street and central square. Above: Middle Farm quarter, under construction since March 1994, constitutes a rounding-off of the existing western suburbs, providing an urban edge, an urban center, and the services that were lacking in the western suburbs. Each urban block is divided into building plots of great dimensional and functional variety. Regional services and institutions such as secondary schools, a sports center, a cemetery, etc., are located along the avenues and in the parks that form the boundaries of the four quarters.



MARKET SQUARE, MIDDLE FARM QUARTER, POUNDBURY, DORSET, L.K., 1989.
The streets of this first phase of Poundbury are extremely irregular, forming intimate and convivial urban spaces. Corridor-type spaces are avoided. Such non-parallel, unpredictable geometries induce spontaneously civilized behavior from car drivers – without the help of ubiquitous traffic gadgetry.





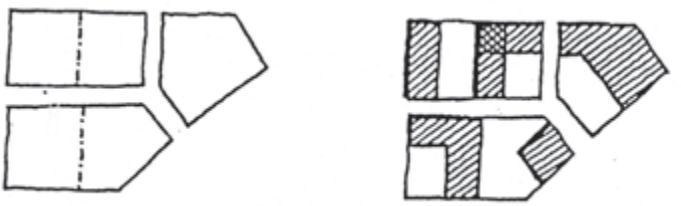
NEW TOWN OF POUNDBURY, DORSET, L.K. with LIAM O'CONNOR, 1989.
Axonometric and section of a typical urban block. It is made up of a large number of plots variously sized to allow typological variety. Houses, schools, and shops are next to clean industries. Cars (one car per 20 square meters of usable floor area) are parked in mews and along street curbs. A usable room is allowed above private garages. Industries and workshops are grouped around private, walled parking areas and courtyards.

A T L A N T I S
T E N E R I F E

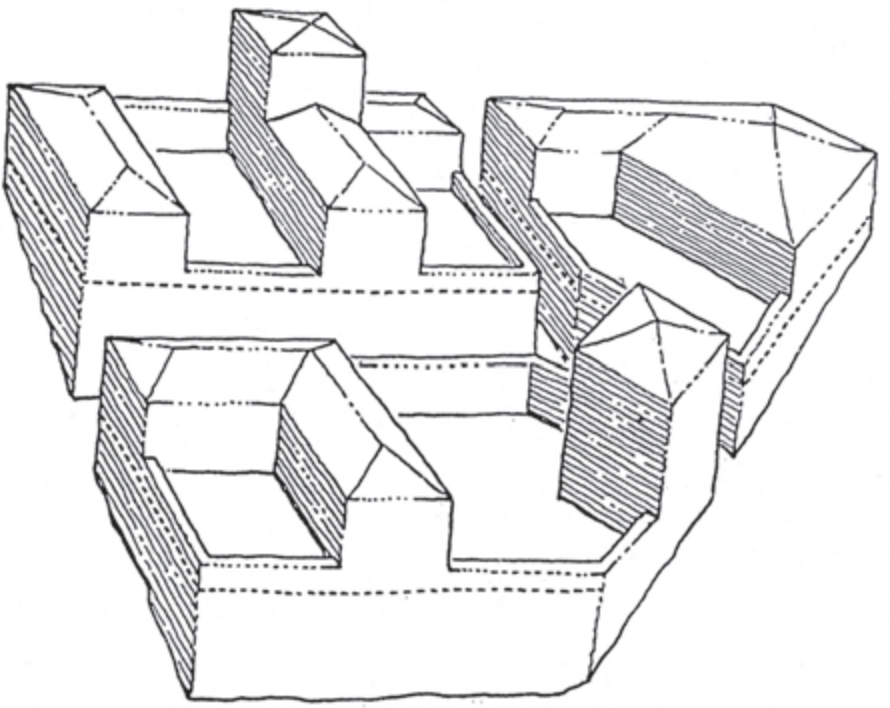
G R O U N D P L A N

L É O N K R I E R 1 9 8 7

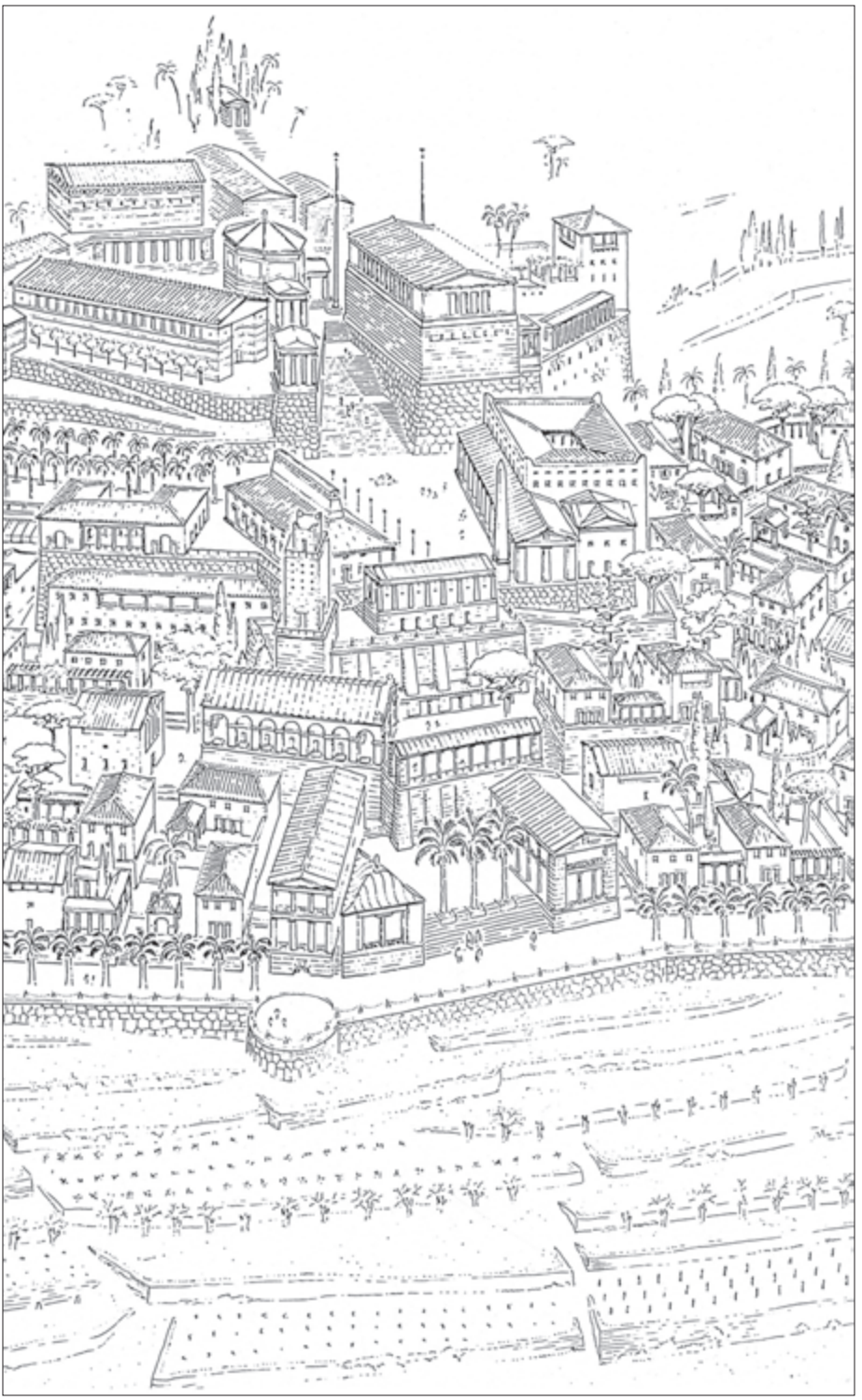
Row House *L-Type* *L-Type with Tower* *Tower* *Polygon*

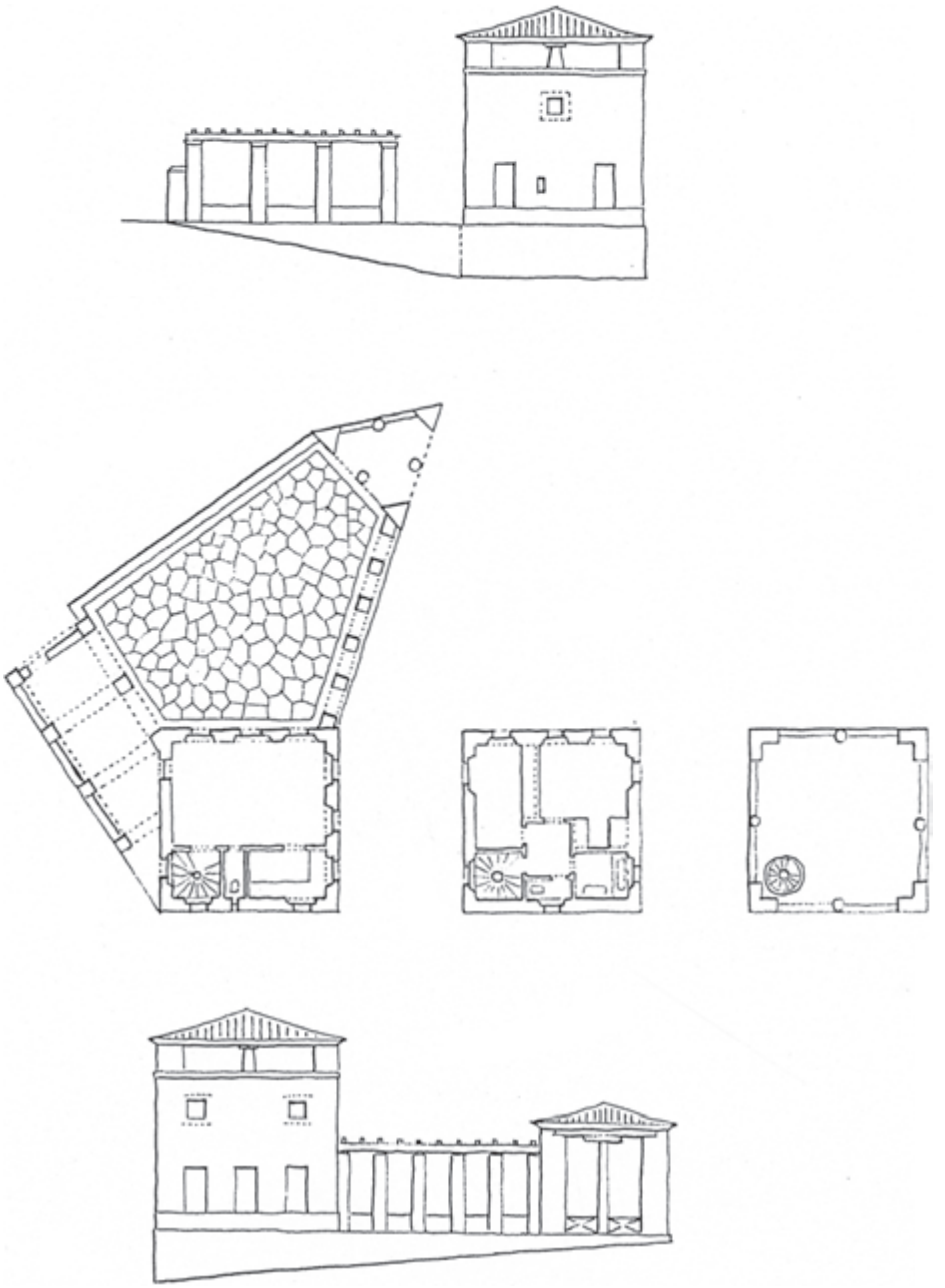


Building Plots *Buildings*

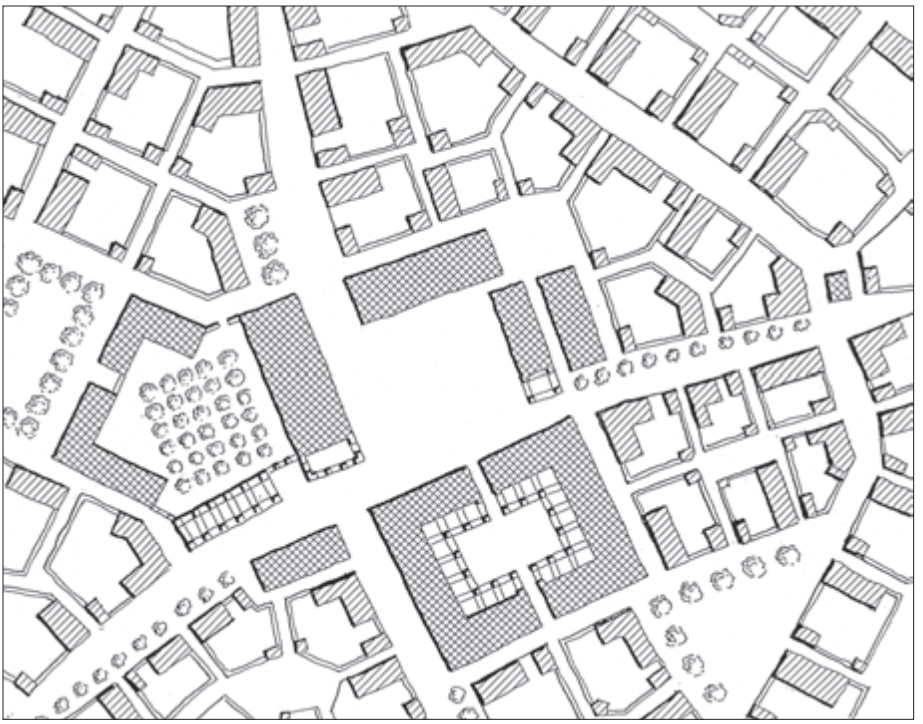


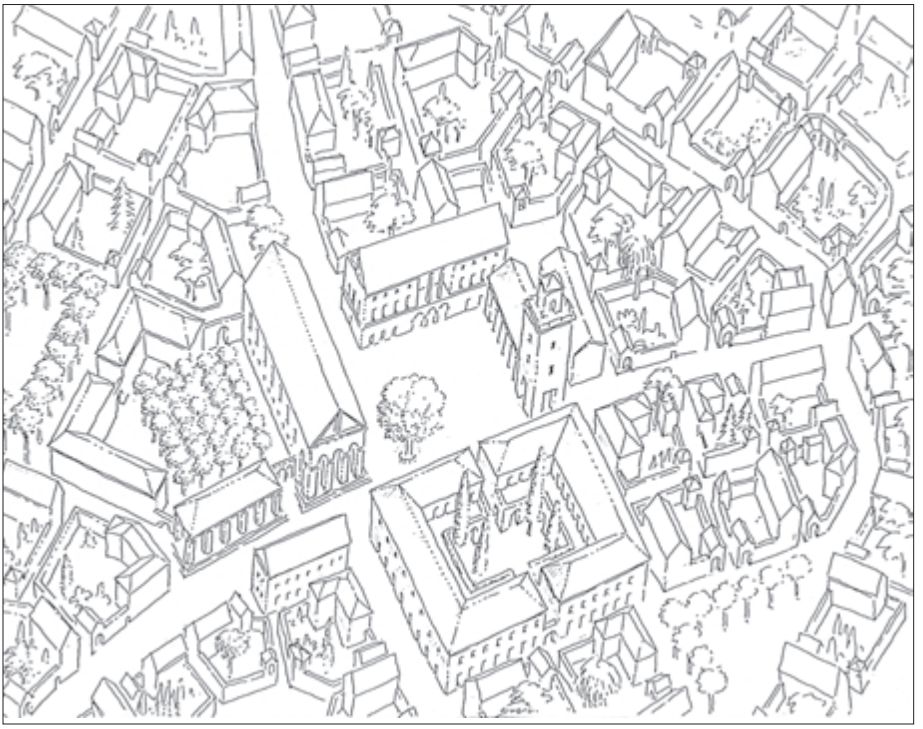
TOWN PLAN AND TYPICAL URBAN BLOCK, ATLANTIS, TENERIFE, L.K. with ROBERT DAY, 1987. Buildings are located on terraces: private gardens are like large rooms, framed by the houses and high walls with one side open to the landscape.

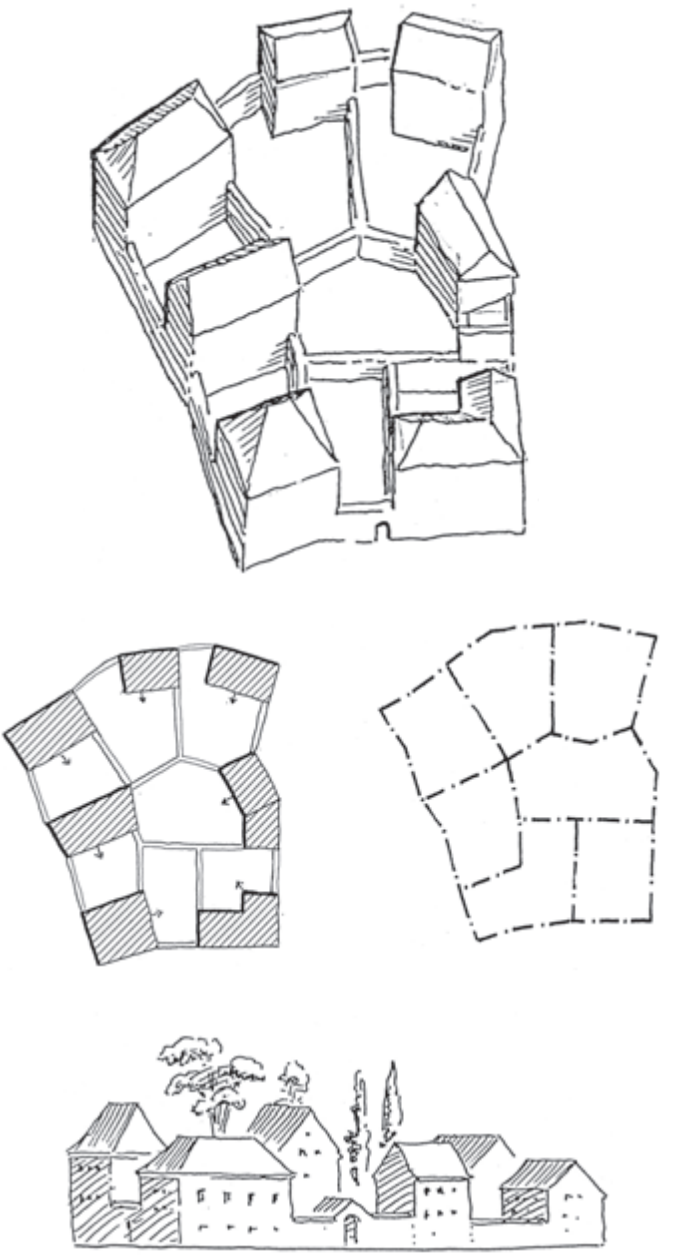




ATLANTIS, TENERIFE, L.K., 1987.
Left: Bird's eye view of the initial concept. Above: architectural development of a typical private plot.

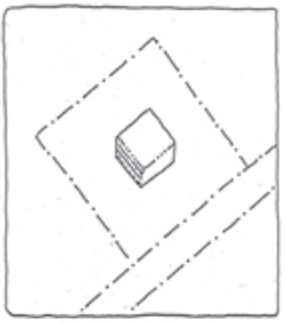


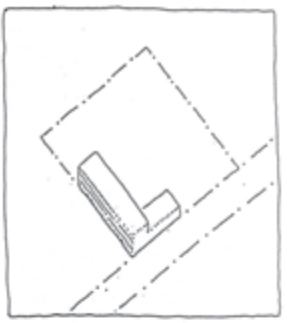




NEW CITY OF POING, BAVARIA, L.K., 1983.
Left: Central Square, Waldviertel. The secondary school buildings are grouped around a public square, permitting subsequent reuse as civic buildings (a common phenomenon in new towns because of the generation gap). Above: This low-density urban block differs considerably from the common suburban block. Buildings are not allowed to occupy the center of the plot. Setbacks are prohibited. Instead houses, garages, and garden walls form continuous, varied public frontages, and protected private gardens. The openness of the actual building fabric permits the multiple orientation and transparency generally considered to be a privilege of detached buildings.

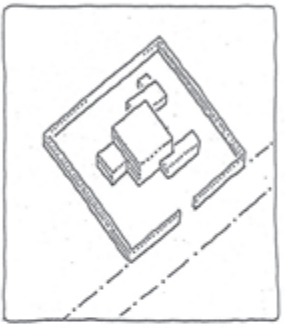
SETBACKS ENFORCE BUILDING AWAY FROM PLOT~ BOUNDARY

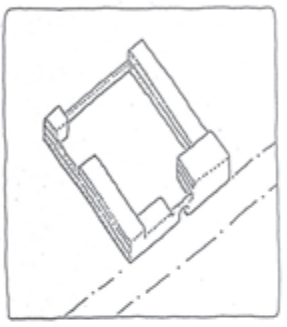




ALIGNMENTS ENFORCE BUILDING ON The BOUNDARY OF THE PLOT

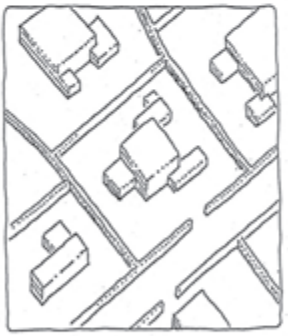
ONLY REALIZING A WEAK DIFFERENCI~ ATION OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC REALM

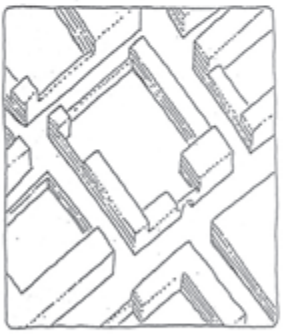




FRONTAGES ESTABLISH A PHYSICAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE REALM

URBAN GROWTH INCREASES THE FEELING OF DISORDER OF THE ENVIRONMENT

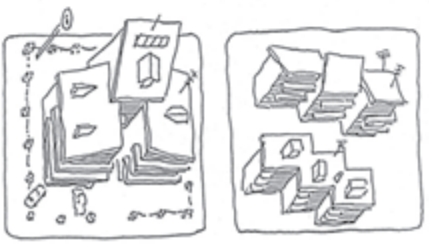


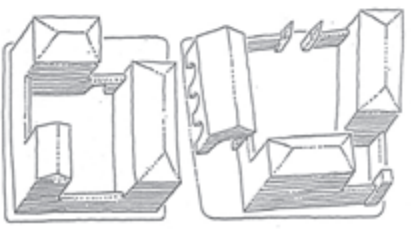


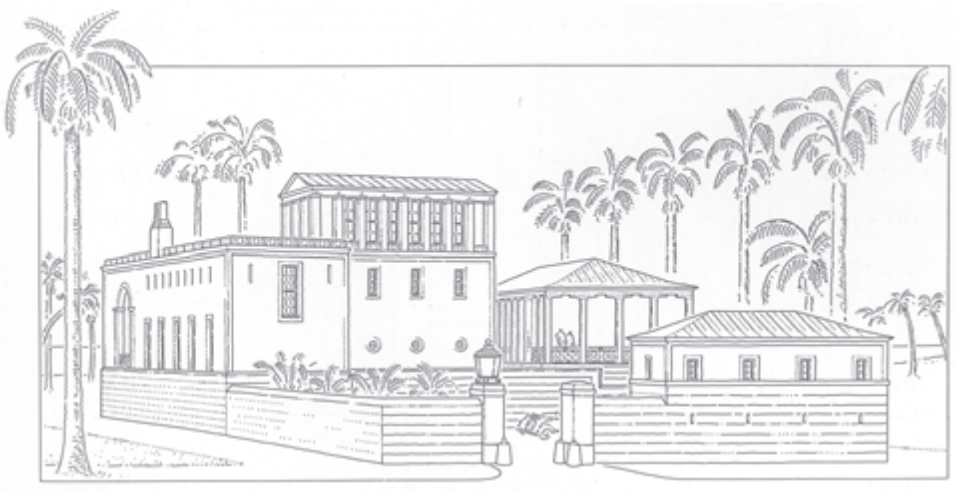
URBAN GROWTH INCREASES THE FEELING OF ORDER AND URBANITY

SUB~URBAN

URBAN







SITING OF BUILDINGS ON SQUARES, STREETS, AND BLOCKS

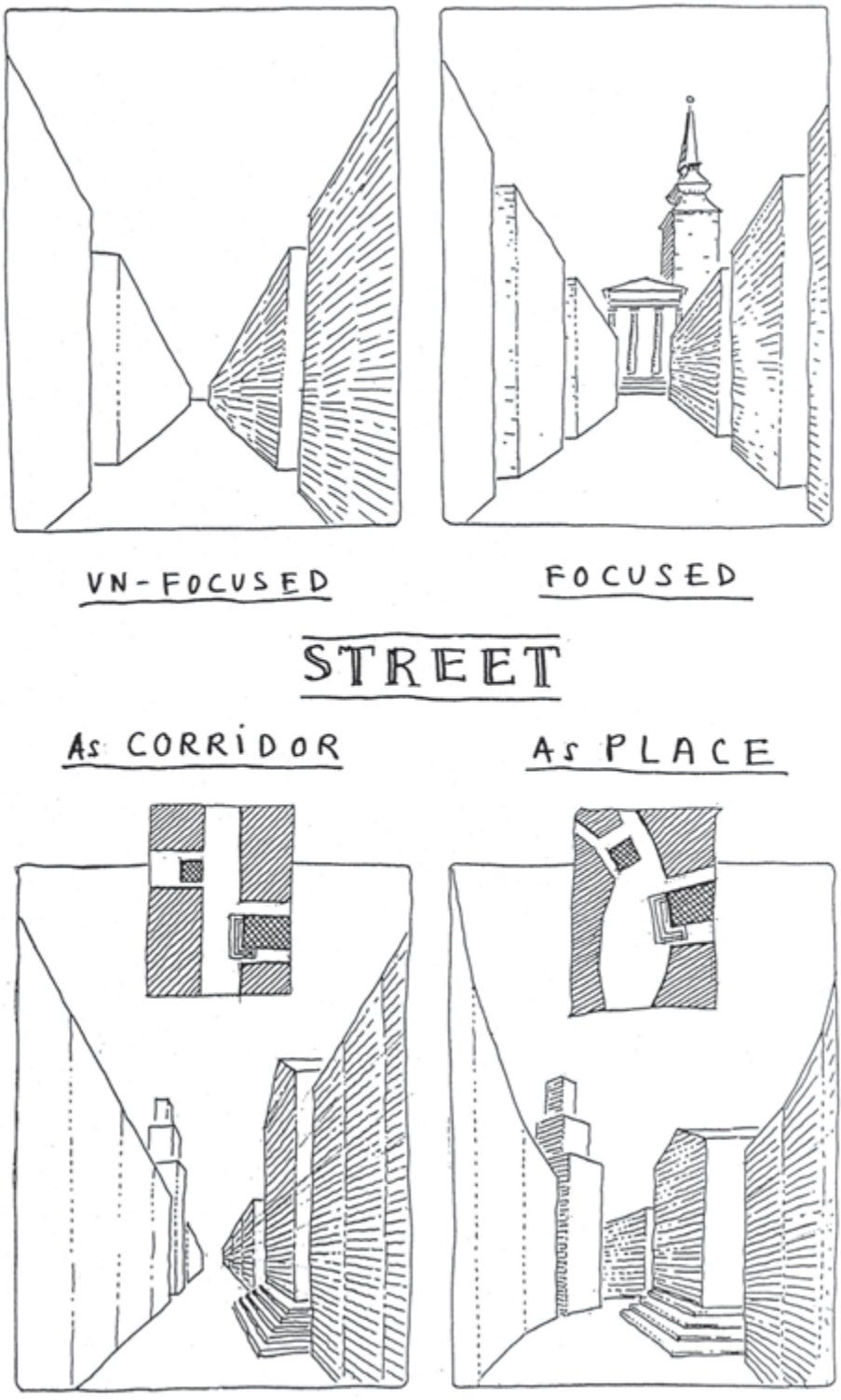
Public and symbolic buildings must occupy the best sites of the city and countryside: the main frontage of major squares, the focus of urban vistas and panoramas, in short, sites of high visibility.

Dominant geographical situations should be reserved for important buildings with a high symbolic value.

Public buildings for local use should be sited within the quarter; those of metropolitan, regional, or national importance should be located on the squares, avenues, and boulevards bordering the quarters and boroughs.

The differentiation in scale, materials, and volumes must be justified by the type and civic status of buildings and should not depend on the mere fancy of the architect or the owner or on purely technical imperatives.

SHOEMAKER HOUSE, GASPARILLO ISLAND, FLORIDA, L.K. with SCOTT MERRILL, 1991-1995.


UN-FOCUSED
FOCUSED
STREET
As CORRIDOR
As PLACE

TYPE, SHAPE AND CHARACTER OF URBAN SPACES

Public space is a void, a structured and structuring void, with specific dimensions, forms, and characteristics. The form of a city and its public spaces cannot be the object of arbitrary experiments. The city is not a laboratory. Public spaces can be built only in the form of streets (linear spaces) and squares (nodal spaces). Whether of grand metropolitan or intimate, local quality, they must present a permanent, familiar character, with dimensions and proportions based on long-term experience.

Public spaces should occupy not more than 35 percent or less than 25 percent of the total area of a quarter. Too little public space is a false economy, too much public space, a false luxury.

Public spaces are organized into regular or irregular patterns and grids of avenues, boulevards, streets, squares, alleyways, courtyards and mews, parks, and gardens.

* * *

Regular geometric and parallel public spaces require a high degree of architectural order and design quality. Streets and squares with non-parallel configurations can accept more modest architecture with freer, less imposing compositions. In general, modest architecture is not appropriate for highly formal public spaces.

* * *

A good urban plan uses all available geometric and topographic devices. Excessive regularity and its opposite, the forced irregularity of public spaces, are to be avoided. The spirit of a place may sometimes spring from a solution that is in conflict with the site conditions: terre-pleins, promontories, bridges, dams, etc.

In both urbanism and architecture, places of quality can be created only if plan, skyline, and organization form an evident bond, be they spectacular or modest in their means.

MIDDLE FARM QUARTER, POUNDBURY, DORSET, L.K. 1989.
Below: Plan of building plots. Above: Building footprints. The great dimensional variety of building plots not only allows great functional diversity but is the basis for authentic architectural variety.

SINGLE-LOT BLOCKS · MULTI-LOT BLOCKS AND THEIR ARCHITECTURE

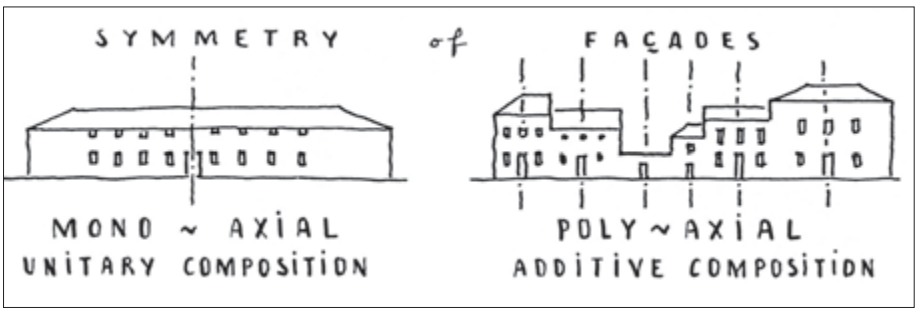
The type, volume, and architecture of buildings are dictated to a large extent by the division of the block into one or several lots.

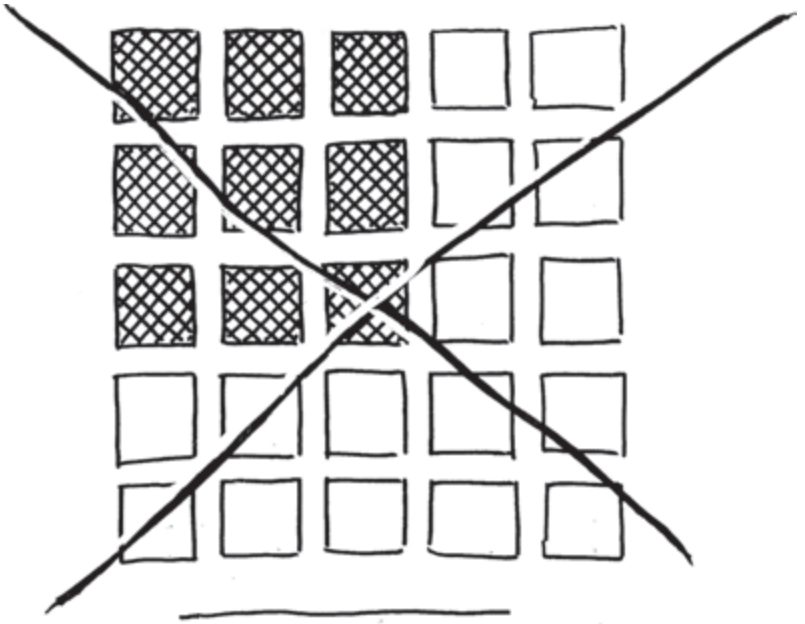
Buildings ought to be located on their plot and in their urban block in such a way as to form a clear frontage onto a street, a square, or a garden. The repetition of obligatory setbacks should be avoided: setbacks, front gardens, and courtyards should be allowed on only a fraction of the total street frontage.

Houses that are set back should have high walls or railings that form a coherent frontage with the architecture of the neighboring gables.

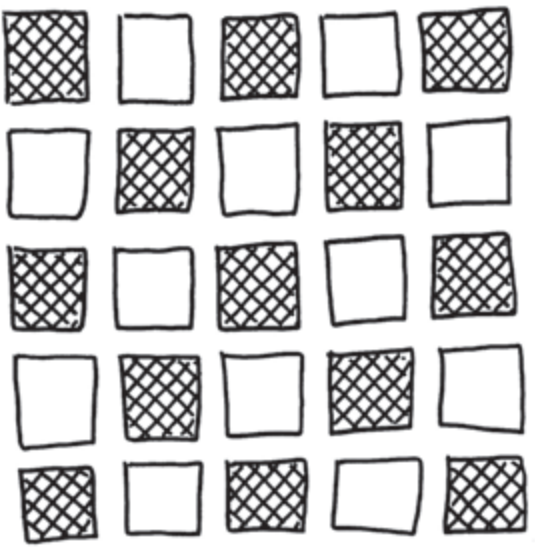
Only blocks reserved for public or non-residential buildings should consist of a single lot. The architecture of a single-lot block may be symmetrical in composition or uniform in style and character in a way that would be neither justifiable nor desirable in a multi-lot block. The symmetry or asymmetry of a facade must be justified typologically and symbolically, and the architecture of a street frontage must reflect to some degree whether the urban block consists of a single lot or several lots.

All the parts of a building that can be seen from a public space, whether set back or not, must be treated as fully-fledged architectural elements. Blind gables, fire escapes, and technical equipment must be out of sight or architecturally articulated.

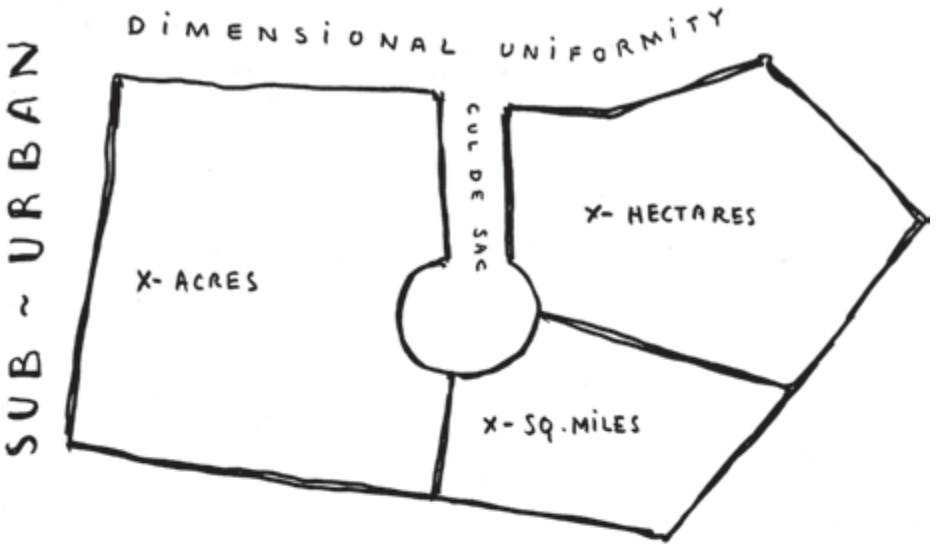




ZONING
of
functions

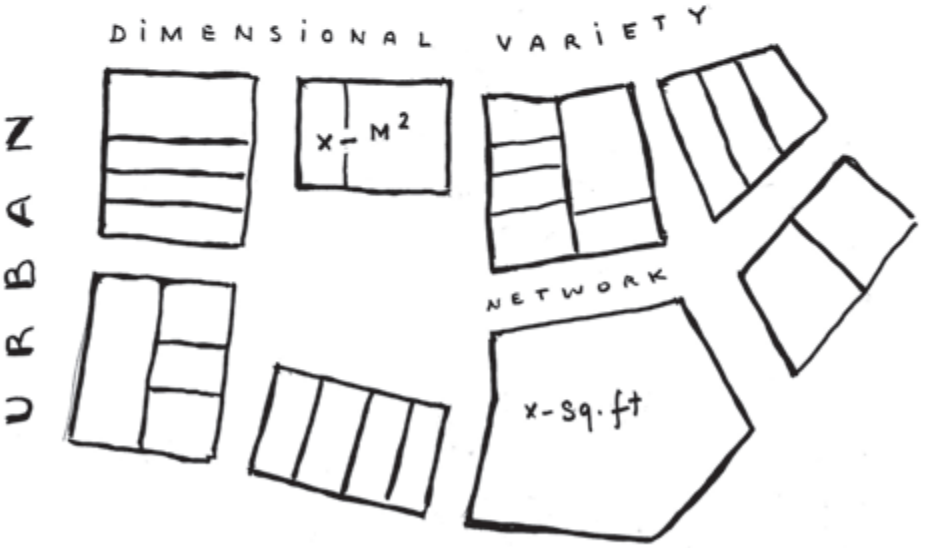


CHECKERBOARD
dispersal
of single-use lots



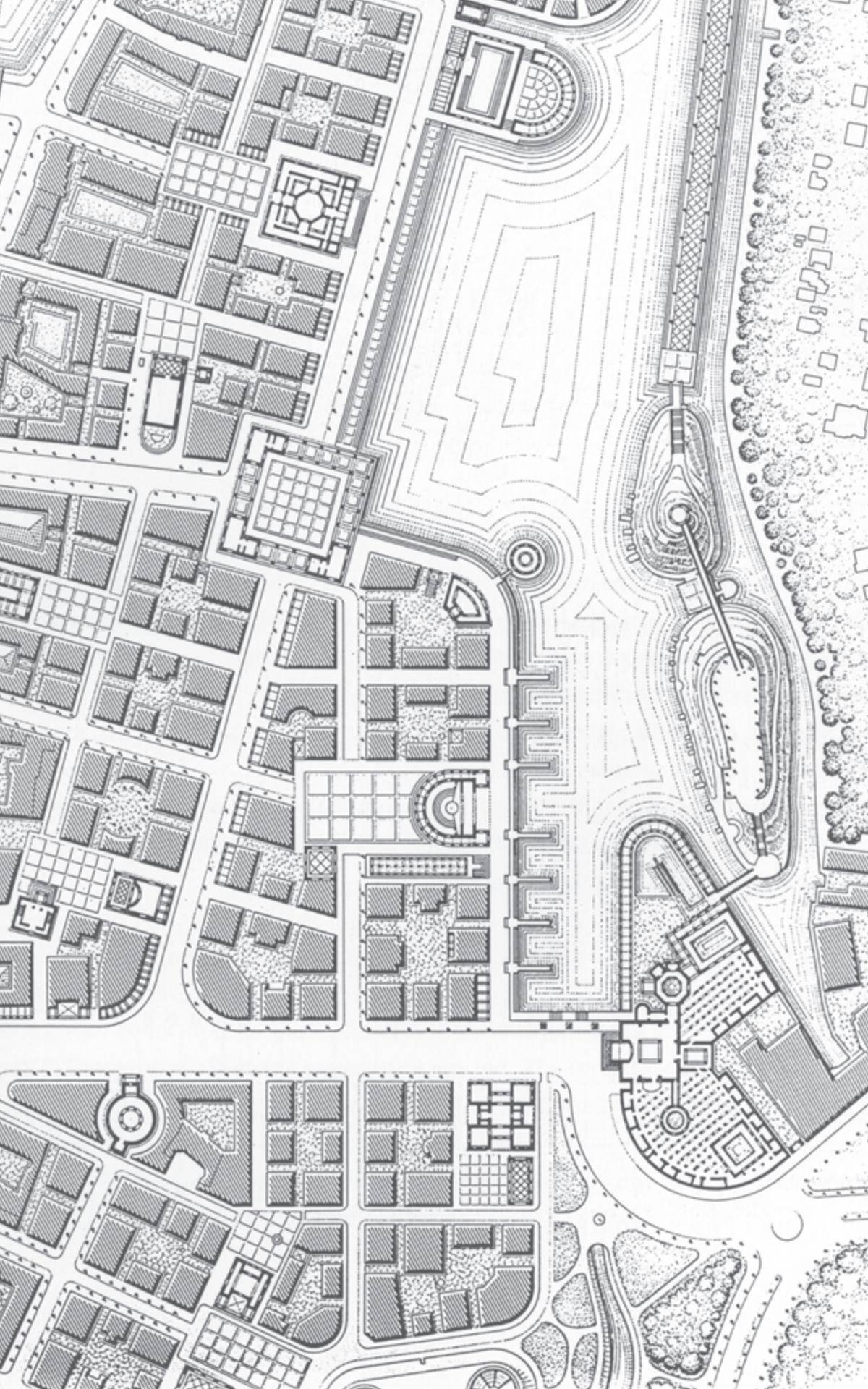
MEGA~SIZED SINGLE~USE ZONED LOTS

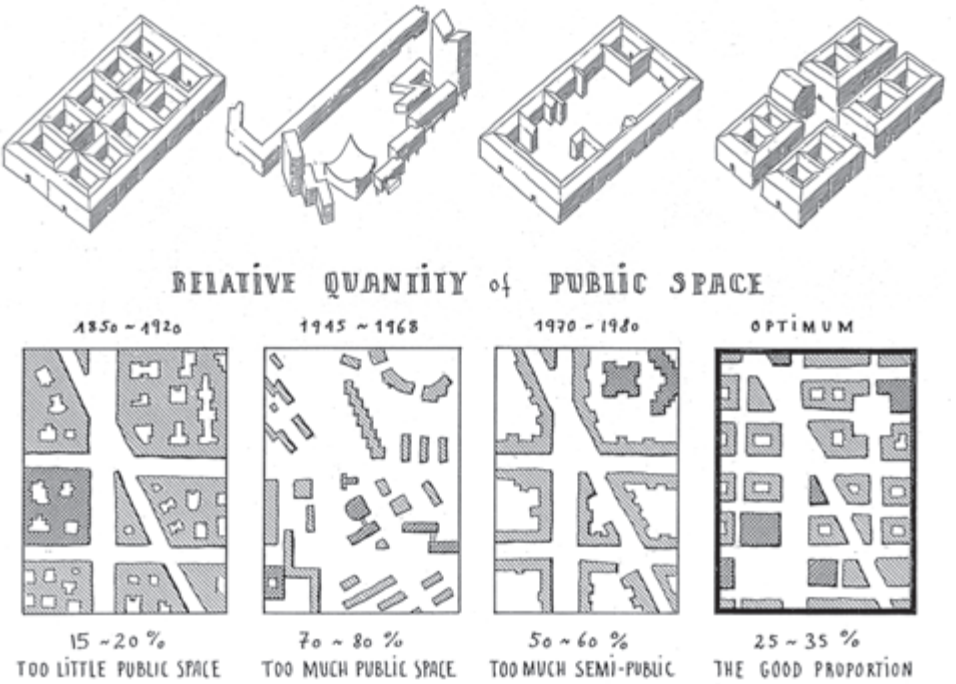
SOCIAL, FUNCTIONAL AND ARCHITECTURAL MONOTONY



VARIOUSLY SIZED + USED BUILDING LOTS

SOCIAL, FUNCTIONAL + ARCHITECTURAL VARIETY





HIERARCHY OF PUBLIC SPACES AND CIRCULATION HIERARCHY

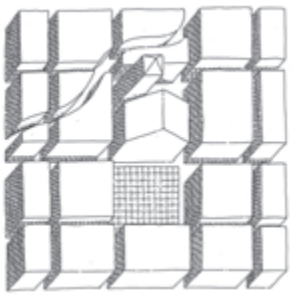
Through traffic must be at a tangent to urban quarters and boroughs. It should be channeled along boulevards, avenues, and parkways that form their physical boundaries. Vehicular and pedestrian movements require spaces of a very different scale and geometry. Narrow pedestrian alleys cut across urban blocks and are interlinked to create, within each quarter, a coherent car-free network.

The central square of a quarter must be reserved for pedestrians. Parts of the high street should be closed to vehicular traffic at certain times only. Car parking parallel to the curb should be permitted on at least one side of most streets.

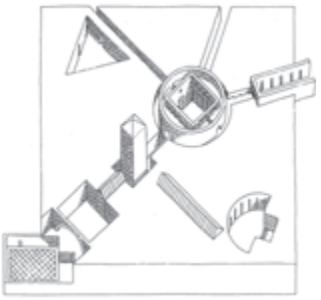
One-way streets with dead-ends and cul-de-sacs leading off them dominate current traffic planning philosophies. This particular street pattern – the creation

NEW PORT QUARTER, TEGEL, BERLIN, L.K. with FRANCISCO SANIN, 1980.
The vast "cultural center" programmed in the zoning plan consists of eight typological components: library, church, town hall, art gallery, sports hall, theater, and swimming pool are dispersed throughout the quarter, avoiding traffic congestion and more importantly, symbolic and functional congestion.

STREETS AND SQUARES RESULT FROM THE POSITIONING OF URBAN BLOCKS



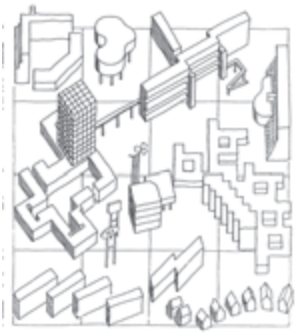
URBAN BLOCKS RESULT FROM A PARTICULAR PATTERN OF STREETS AND SQUARES



STREETS AND SQUARES ARE PRECISE FORMAL TYPES, URBAN BLOCKS ARE THE RESULT

PRINCIPAL TYPES OF PUBLIC SPACES. LK 1977.

TOO MUCH PUBLIC SPACE = FALSE LUXURY · TOO LITTLE URBAN SPACE = FALSE ECONOMY

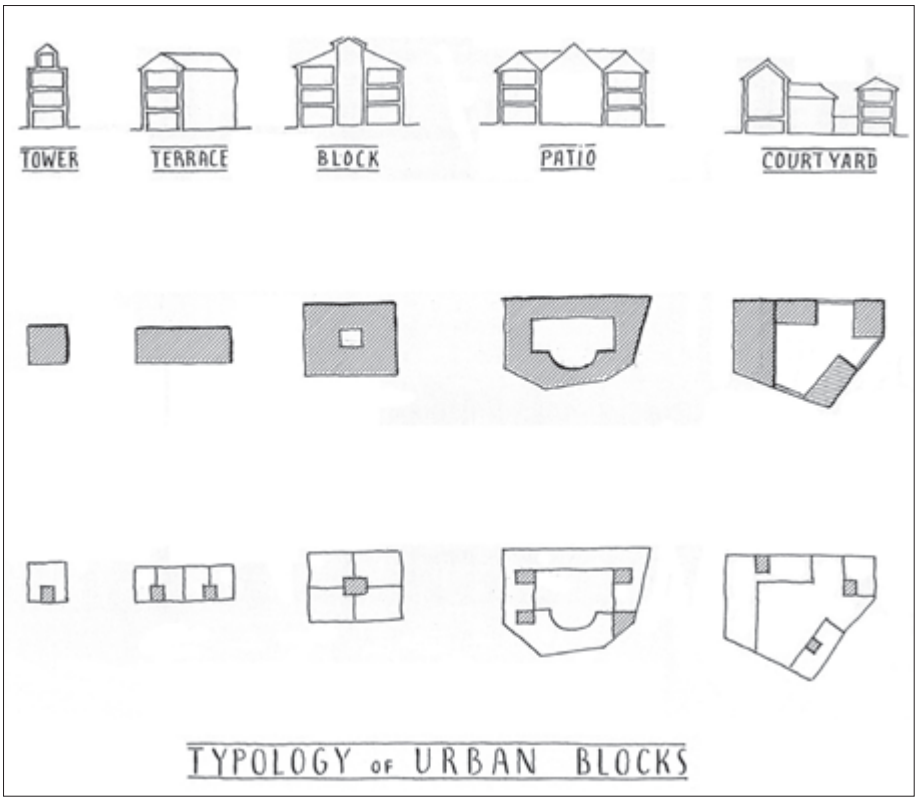


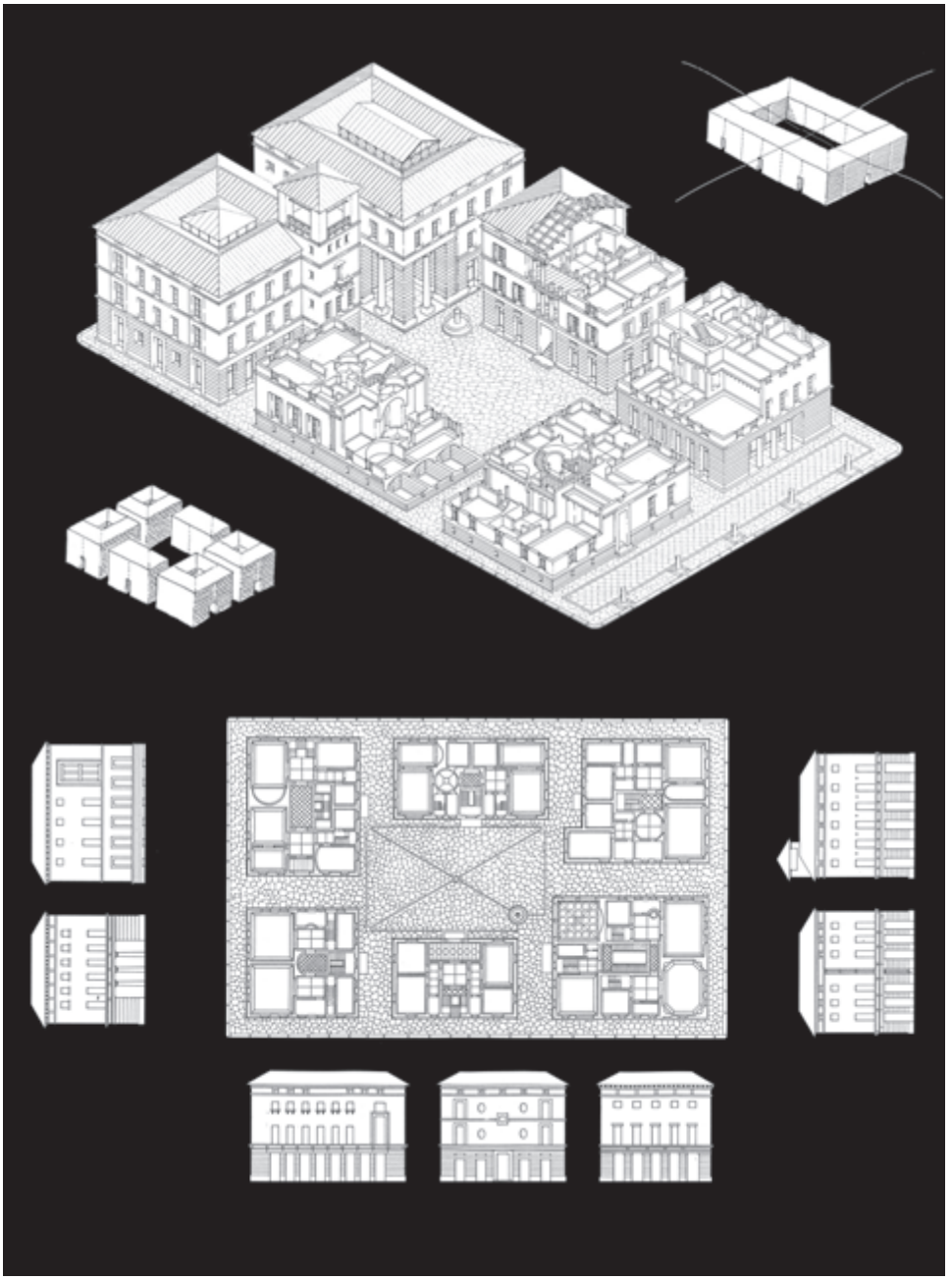
BUILDINGS DO NOT FORM A DESCRIBABLE SPACE: NO STREETS, NO SQUARES, NO ALLEYWAYS. THE FORM OF PUBLIC SPACES IS ARBITRARY AND ACCIDENTAL. THIS TYPE OF SETTLEMENT CAN BE WELL POLICED, WELL PAVED, AND WELL MAINTAINED ONLY FOR EXCEPTIONAL USES AND IN RARE AND PRIVILEGED SITES.

of a technocratic mentality and now elevated into an exclusive system, even a paradigm – has clearly demonstrated its unique capacity to disorient, confuse and cause gridlock on a regular basis. The two-way street with more-or-less parallel driveways, pavements, and curbside parking is, on the other hand, a solution of unique genius that combines immense functional, practical, psychological, aesthetic, and safety-related advantages; it is a synthesis of circulation efficiency and urbanity.

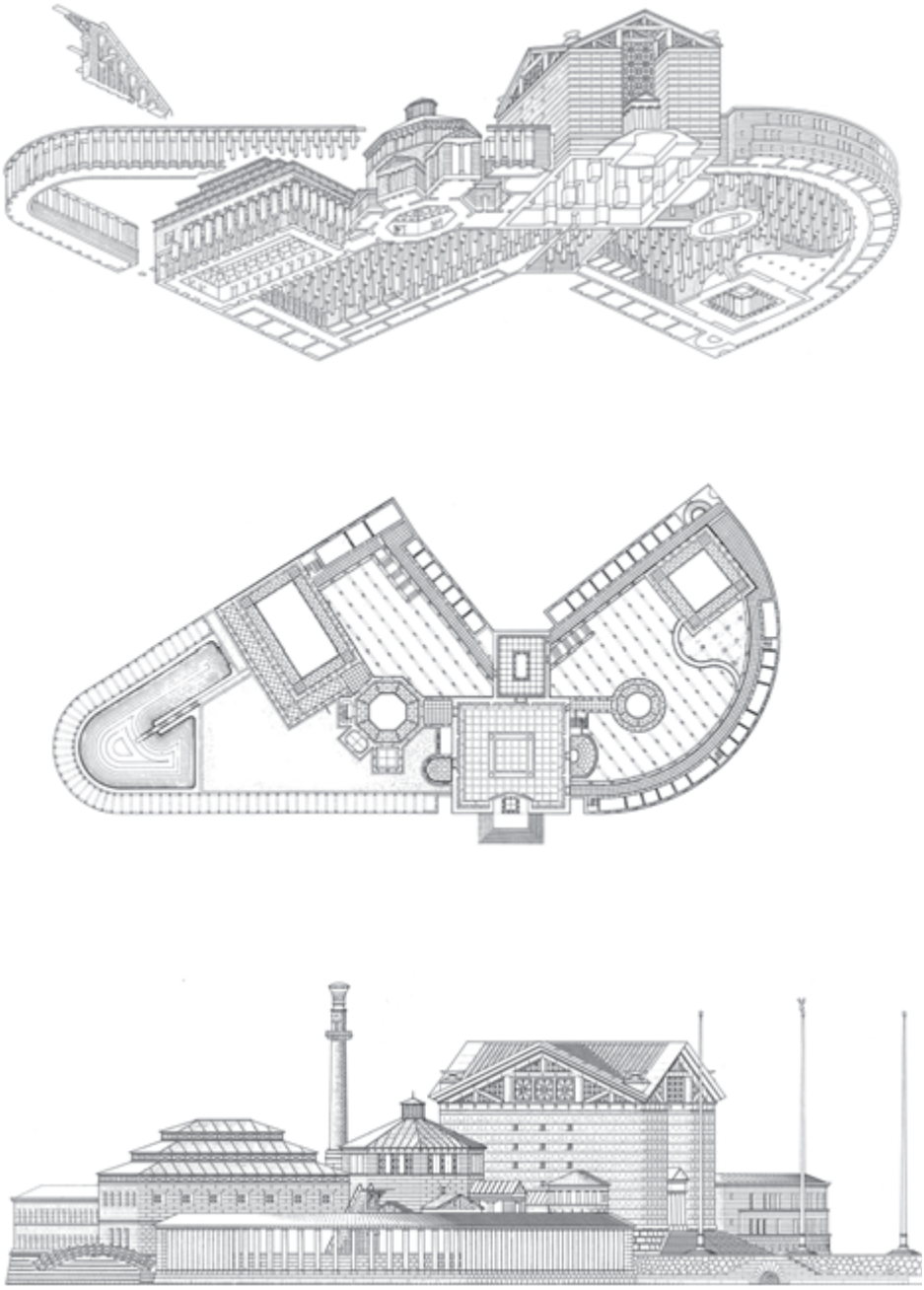
Underground parking should be encouraged under central blocks. Multistory car parks should be small and far apart; they should not have a street facade or they should be screened by narrow office buildings or workshops. Parking in courtyards and mews should be limited to peripheral blocks of the quarter.

The speed of vehicles should be controlled not by signs and technical gadgets (humps, traffic islands, crash barriers, traffic lights, etc.) but by the civic and urban character of streets and squares that is created by their geometric configuration, their profile, paving, planting, lighting, street furniture, and architecture.

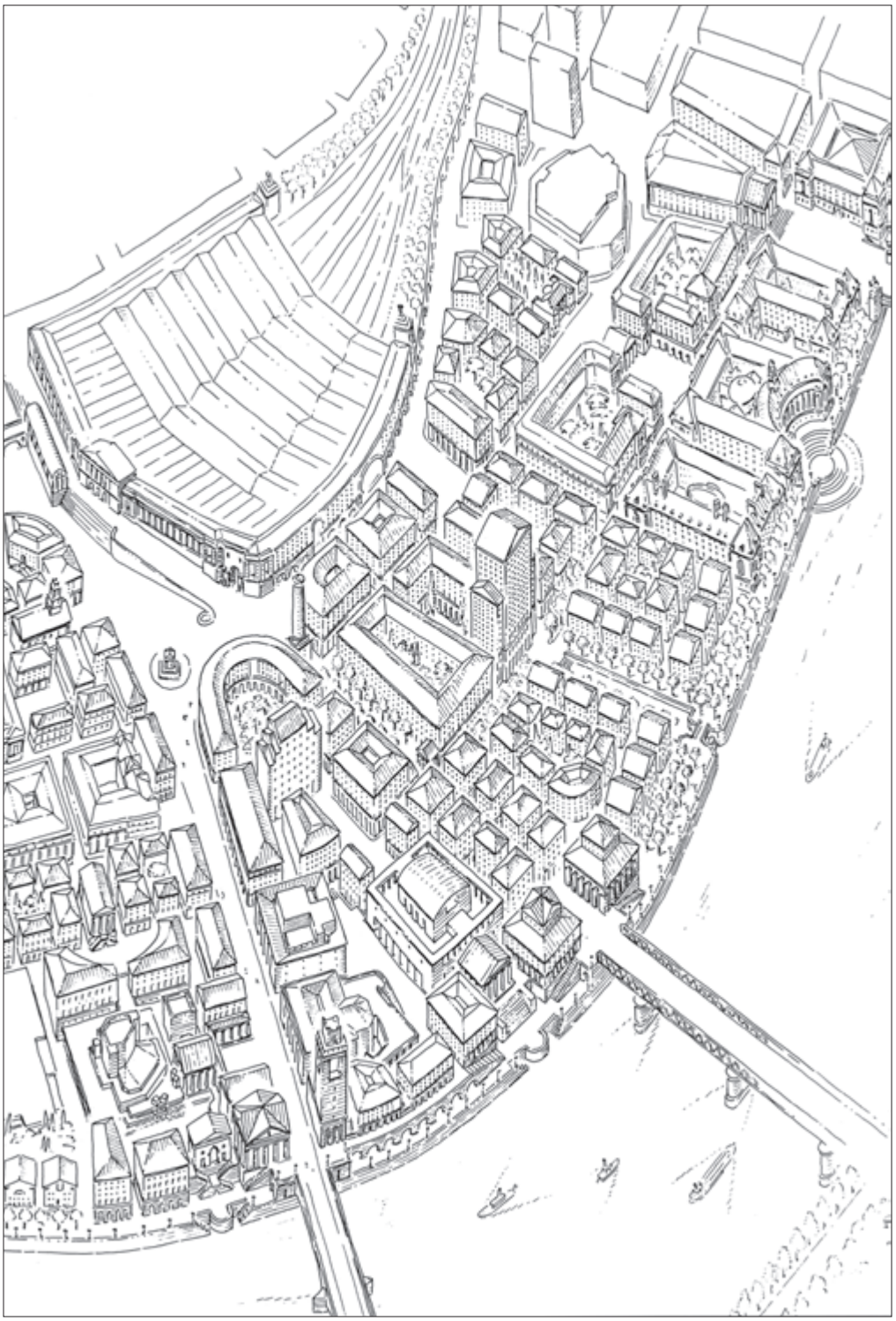




INSULA TEGELENSIS, L.K., 1980.
Developed for the Port Quarter of Tegel in Berlin, this type of urban block allows a relatively high plot ratio (2 : 1, i.e. the usable floor surface corresponds to twice the plot size) with two or three storeys only. The standard perimeter block requires up to six floors to reach this density. Furthermore each apartment is located on a street corner and thus enjoys good quality natural and reflected light and varied vistas.



THERMAE TEGELENSIS, L.K., 1980.
An illustration of a typological composition. The plasticity of external volumes expresses in three dimensions the variety of internal spaces and functions of this large thermal facility situated on the edge of the new port quarter of Tegel. The various swimming pools occupy different pavilions, all linked by a hypostyle, glass-roofed hall.



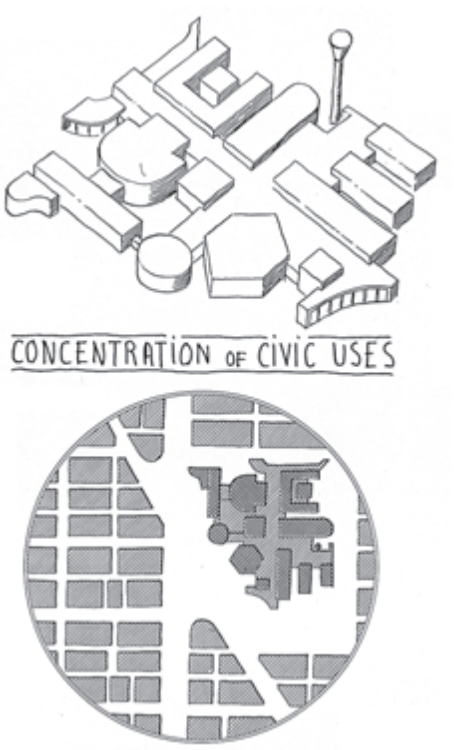
MASTER - PLAN
FOR THE AREAS BETWEEN THE BRIDGES OF
BLACKFRIARS & WESTMINSTER
ON THE SOUTHBANK OF THE RIVER THAMES
at
LONDON
TO BE DIVIDED IN TWO URBAN QUARTERS NAMELY
Belvedere & All Saints

NEW SOUTH BANK QUARTERS, LONDON. COUNTER PROJECT AGAINST GLC INTENTIONS COMMISSIONED BY DAN CRUICKSHANK AND DEJAN SUDJIC FOR BLUEPRINT MAGAZINE, L.K., 1984.

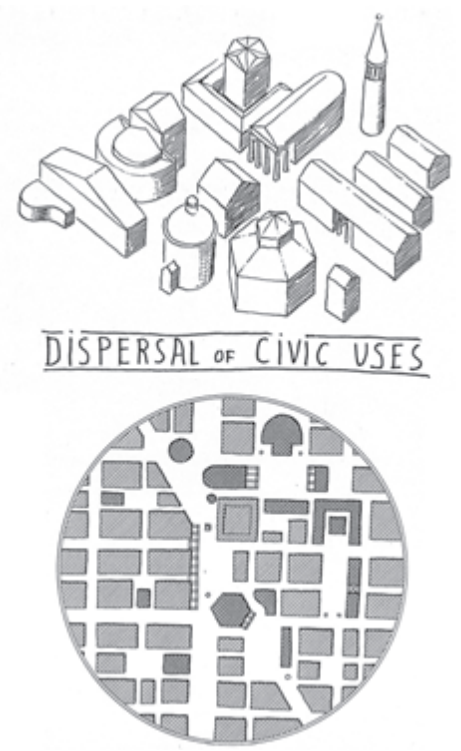
Existing Buildings – dark-hatch covers structures that would disappear during the reconstruction of the area – light-hatch shows land reclaimed from the river.
Proposed new buildings hatched, integrated with existing buildings to form a pattern of streets and squares creating neighborhoods with distinct centers, and allowing pedestrian traffic to circulate easily throughout the two quarters.

THE POLYCENTRIC ZONING OF FUNCTIONS

Residential and non-residential uses should be dispersed in a checkerboard fashion by block, by plot, and by floor. Along the high street and in the central square commercial use should be permitted on the ground floor but never authorized above the mezzanine or below the ground floor.

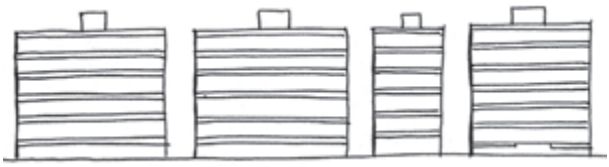


Large plots for industry, commerce, and crafts should be located on the edge of each quarter with access to large circulation roads. This stimulates urban enterprises and jobs in proximity to homes. It is a way to develop local systems of supply and demand capable of counteracting the



often impoverishing influence of large economic monopolies. Small and medium-sized enterprises together with other non-residential and non-polluting uses should be dispersed throughout the quarter. Large-scale buildings should generally be located on the perimeter of the quarters, fronting onto the avenues and boulevards.

Public and civic functions should not be concentrated in specialized areas but dispersed throughout the quarters and intermixed with other urban functions, thereby avoiding the monotonized, standardizing effects of functional zoning. This is a logic based on polycentricity, which must not be confused with the logic of decentralization.



Limited Building Height
Maximum realization of rentable floors – Minimum Ceiling height
UNIFORM SKYLINE

BUILDING HEIGHTS

The most beautiful and pleasant cities that survive in the world today have all been conceived with buildings of between two and five floors.

There is no ecologically defensible justification for the erection of utilitarian skyscrapers; they are built for speculation, or short-term gain, or out of pretentiousness. The vulnerability and fragility of vertical megastructures have been tragically demonstrated by the annihilation of the World Trade Center twin towers in New York. Imagine if both the World Trade Center and Pentagon were campus-type three-story developments.

Paradoxically, the imposition of a universal height limit for buildings of between two and five floors does not preclude building high and monumental. St. Paul's Cathedral in London is a skyscraper on one level. The Eiffel Tower has only three floors. The Capitol in Washington, Nôtre-Dame de Paris, the Forbidden City in Beijing, and even the Seven Wonders of the World respected these limits.

Limited Number of Floors
No height limit – Maximum Variation of Building and Ceiling height
VARIED SKYLINE

The universal limitation of building heights between two and five stories would both protect historic centers threatened with over-development and at the same time encourage the redevelopment of the suburbs. Instead of inflating the cost of buildings in the center, such a limitation would contribute to an increase in property values in those areas that often remain undervalued.

Thus building heights should not be limited metrically (such regulations are always arbitrary and lead to a stultifying uniformity) but by the number of floors – between two and five, depending on the character of the village or city, the nature, status and use of the building, the width of roads and squares, and the prestige of the site. It should be observed, moreover, that building-technology, servicing, and conception change radically (separation of structure and wall construction, elevators, expensive services, fire protection, etc.) for buildings of more than five floors. In addition, a limit on the number of floors permits an evident and natural differentiation between public and private uses, between symbolic and utilitarian character, and between monumental and domestic architecture.

VERTICAL & HORIZONTAL

URBAN GROWTHS and CONGESTORS

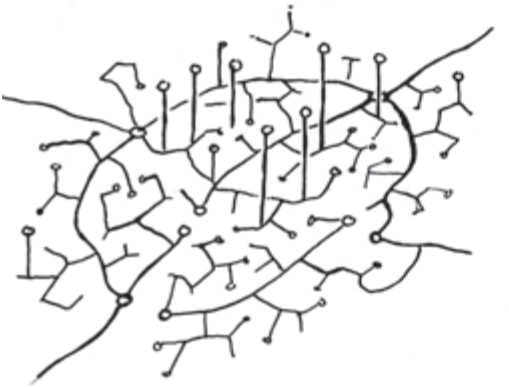
GROWTH · HYPERGROWTH · WEEDS ETC

TOWN

MATURE
HORIZONTAL NETWORK
WITH VERTICAL PEDESTRIAN
TWIGS (SHORT CUL-DE-SACS)

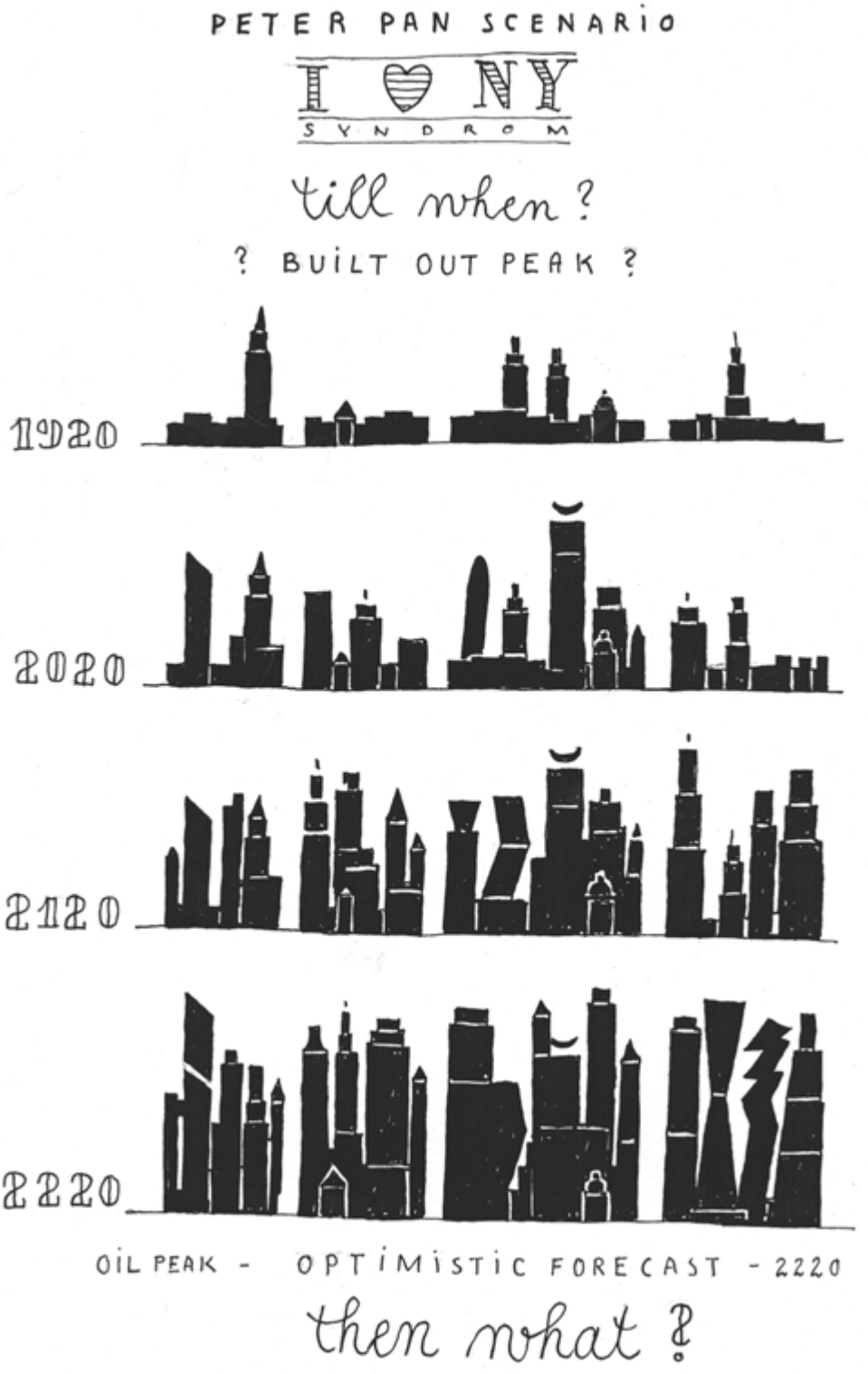
MATURE
HORIZONTAL NETWORK
USURPED BY OVERSIZED MECHANIZED
CUL-DE-SACS (WEEDS)
NETWORK CONGESTORS

DOWN-TOWN



SPRAWL

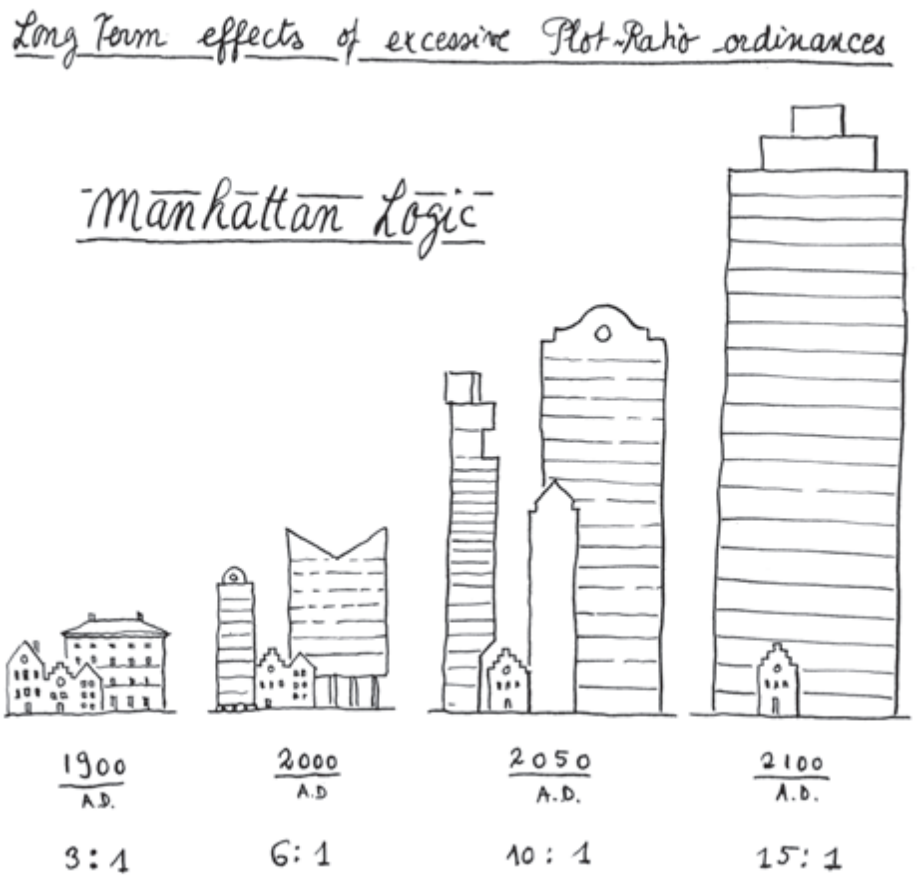
SPRAWLING LABYRINTH
MECHANIZED VERTICAL AND
HORIZONTAL CUL-DE-SACS-MAXIMUM
GEOGRAPHIC CONGESTION


PETER PAN SCENARIO
I ♥ NY
SYNDROM
till when?
? BUILT OUT PEAK ?
1920
2020
2120
2220
OIL PEAK - OPTIMISTIC FORECAST - 2220
then what?

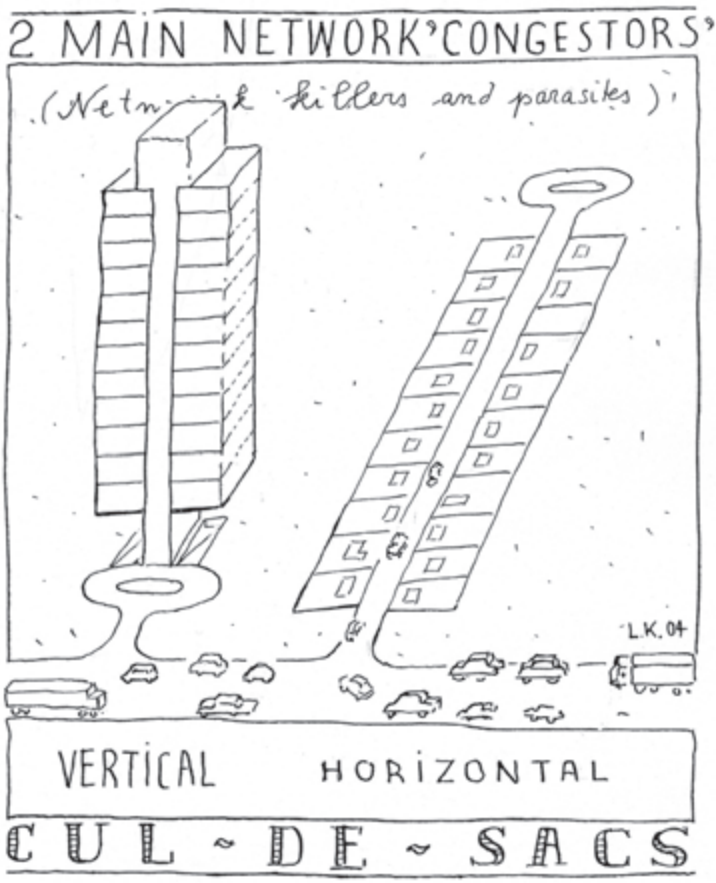
IN PRAISE OF TOWERS
(Against the Utilitarian Skyscraper)

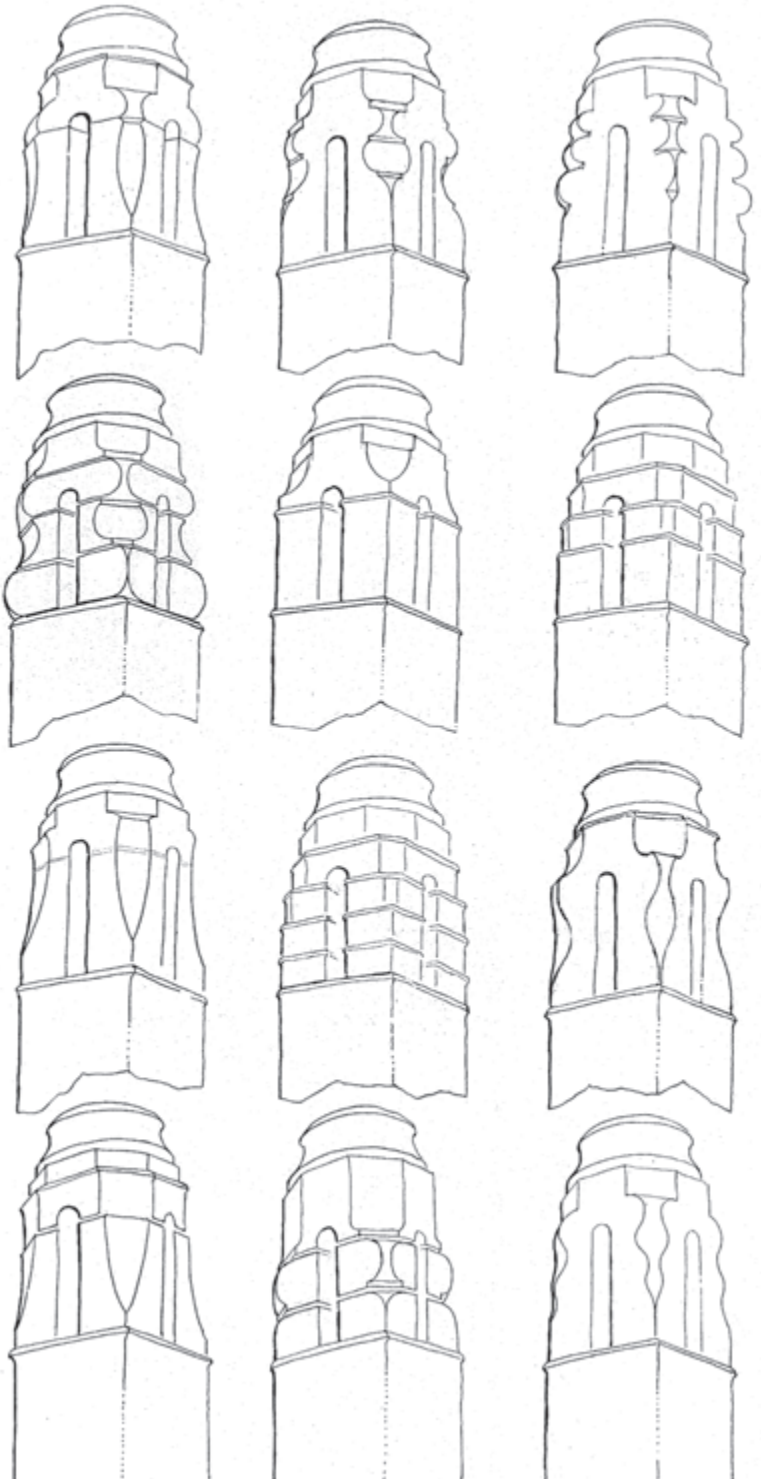
Living high in the sky above a beautiful land-, sea-, or townscape is a compelling idea for the romantic dreamer. Quasimodo's abode, however, retains very little of its antique charms, when lost in the noisy gloom of a skyscraping thicket. The dream of omnipotence, so unforgettably characterized by newspaper tycoon Gail Wynand's great office window above Manhattan doesn't fare well either in the twilight of vertical sprawl. Notre-Dame relocated in La Defense, or the Eiffel Tower in Fifth Avenue pale into insignificance.

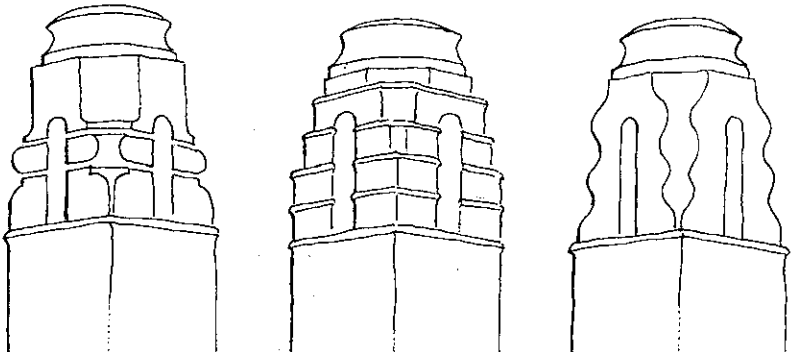
Elevator-, like wheelchair-dependence, should remain the reserve of the disabled. The dominance of urban skylines should be held by symbolic rather than utilitarian skyscrapers, by domes and campaniles, by steeples and belvederes, memorial columns, and arches.



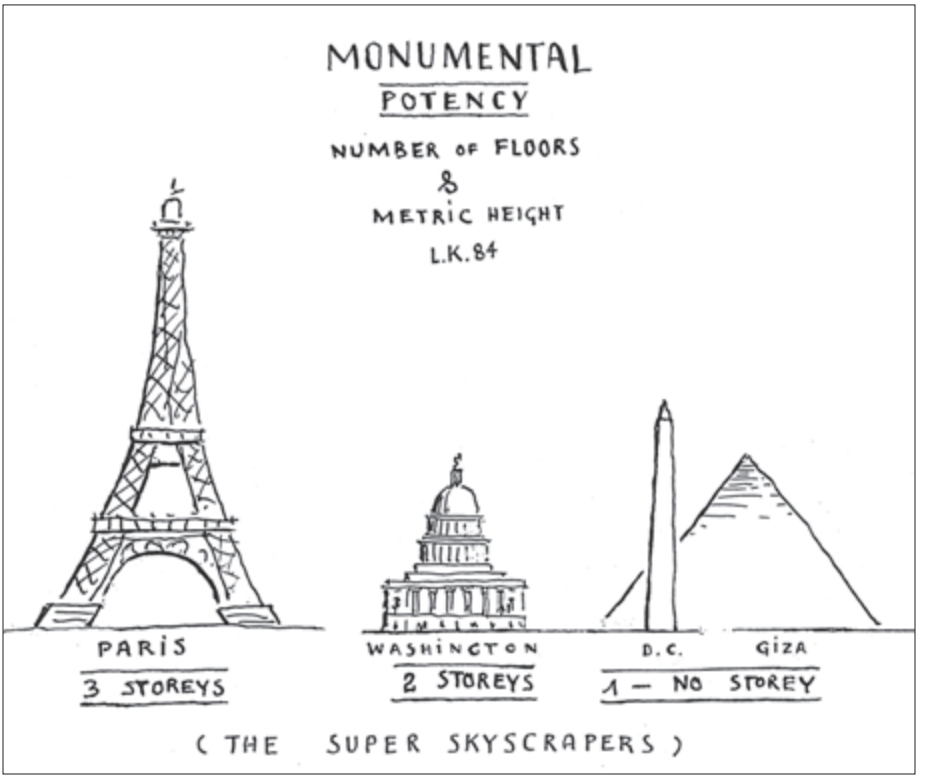
VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL GATED COMMUNITIES

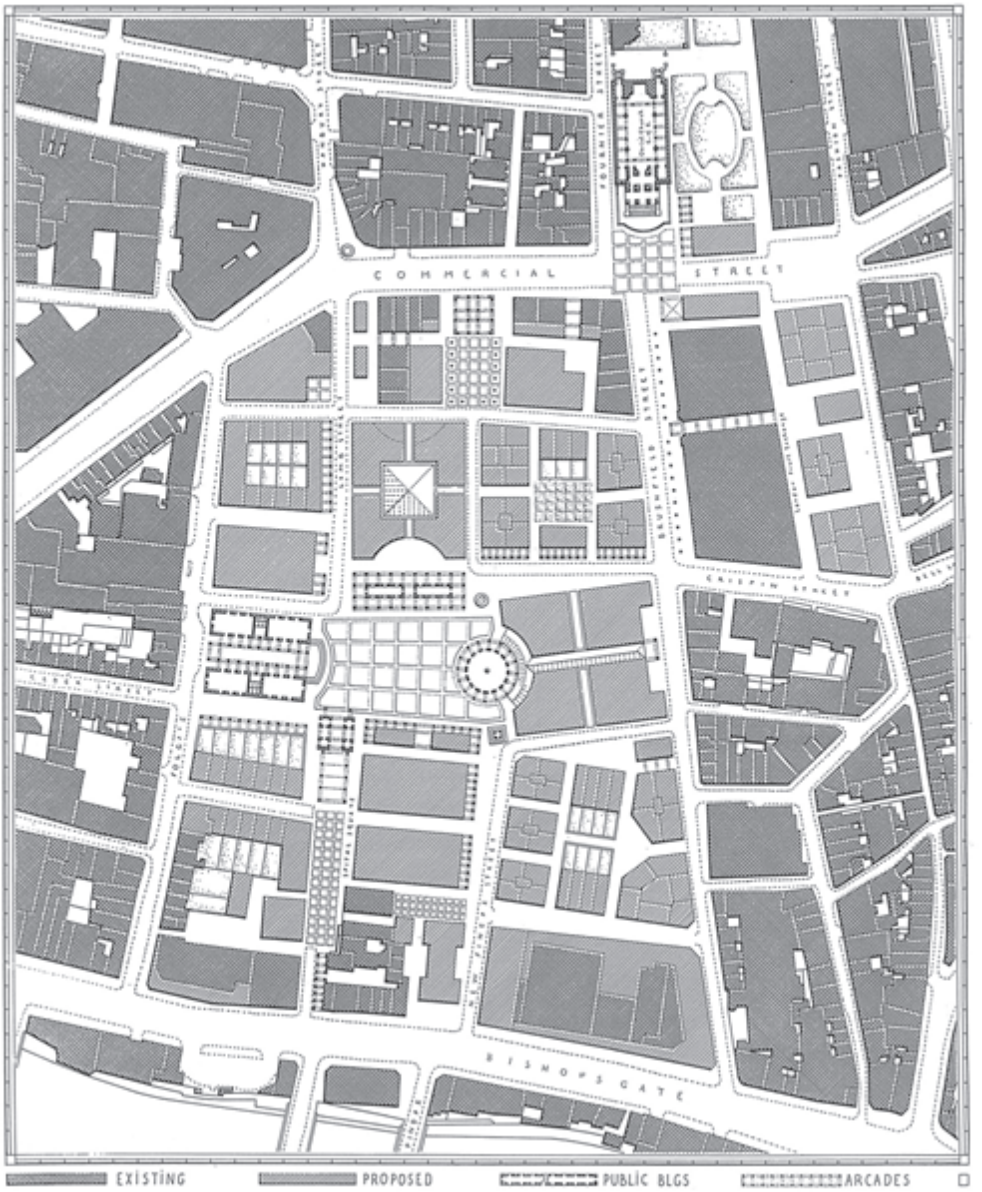






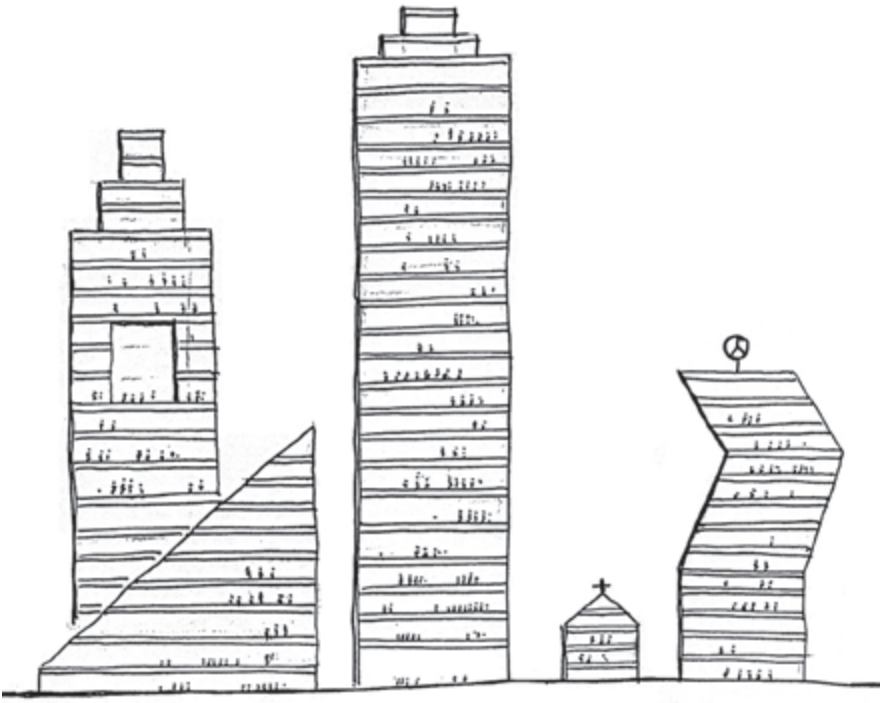
In the horizontal expanse of the traditional city the tower is a vertical accent, which, like punctuation in a text, allows breathing space, creates rhythm, eases legibility, and above all establishes a hierarchy of uses, of meanings and locations. The global triumph of the utilitarian high rise and antennae has paradoxically sounded the death knell for the symbolic skyscraper, for that family of heroic structures, which encompasses the Light-Tower of Alexandria, the Eiffel Tower, and the Washington Monument. Their symbolic and aesthetic power being in inverse proportion to their functional utility.



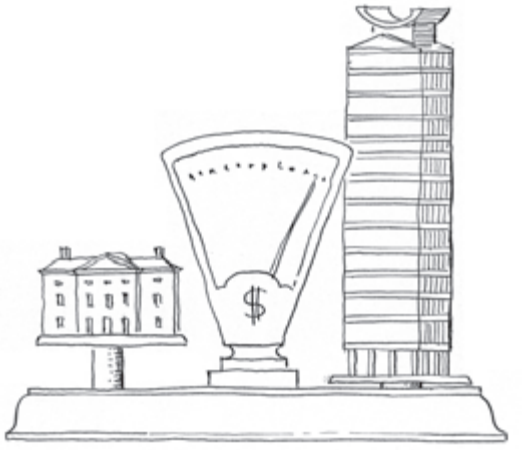


REDEVELOPMENT OF SPITALFIELDS MARKET, LONDON.
COMMISSIONED BY STUART LIPTON FOR STANHOPE LTD., L.K., 1986.
In this new form of mixed-use business district, adjacent to the City of London, office buildings and residential blocks are laid out in a checkerboard pattern by block and by plot, avoiding the dispiriting effects of area zoning. Opposite: Pedestrian piazzetta inside a mixed residential commercial block. This project, which was sanctioned by royal, media, and public approval, followed rigorously the legally prescribed building densities, floor numbers, and mixed-use zoning. A collusion of public authorities and development pressure led to the over-built "office park," which is permanently disfiguring the historic Spitalfields neighborhood and Nicholas Hawksmoor's formidable Christ Church.

Low buildings & High ceilings



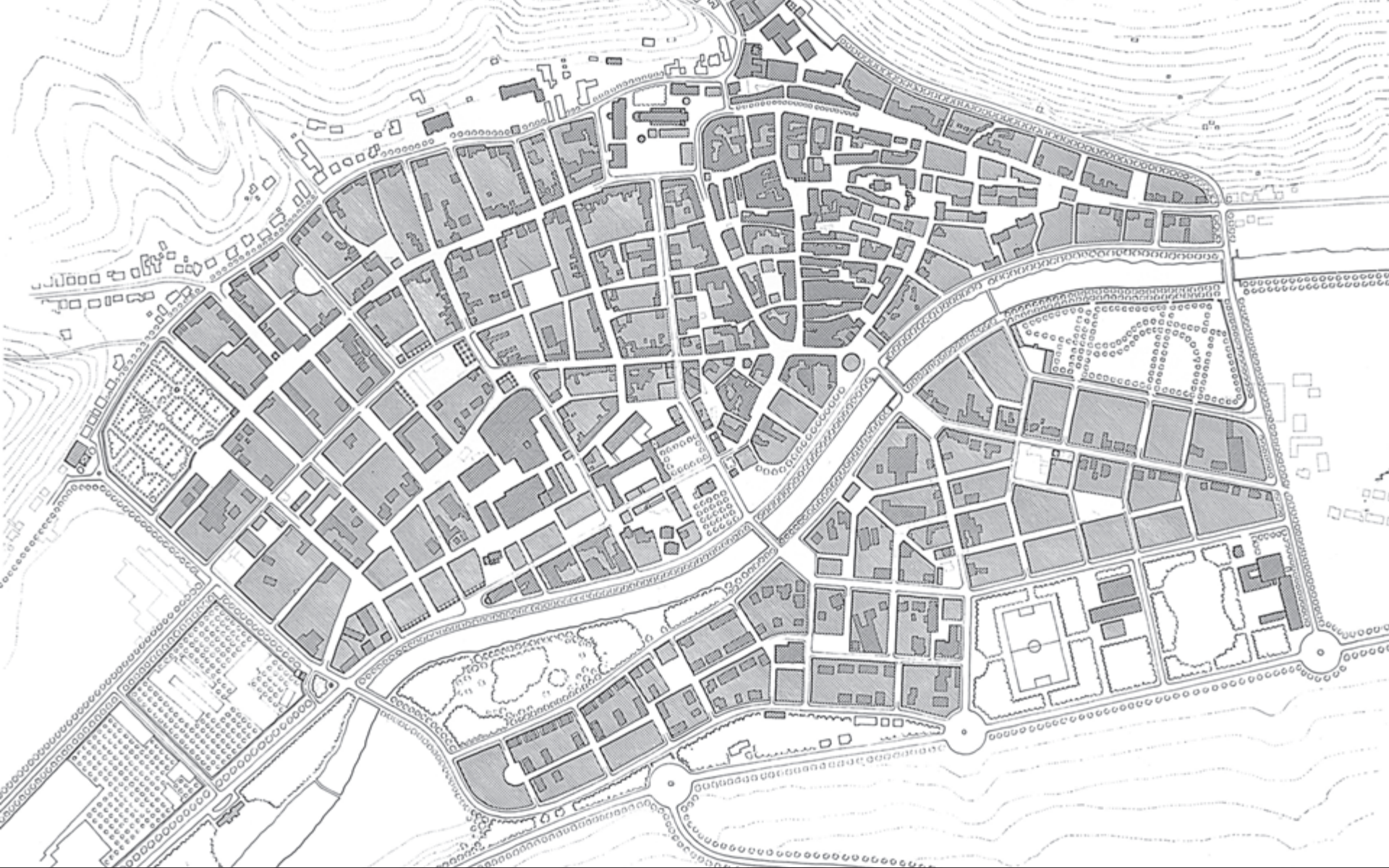
High buildings & Low ceilings



CRITICAL PROBLEMS OF PLOT-RATIOS

Historic cities rarely surpass a plot-ratio of 2:1 ratio of floor area to plot area. This density is easily achieved by buildings not exceeding three to five floors, allowing well lit and humanely proportioned private gardens, courtyards, and public spaces. Since the nineteenth century we have observed with each new revision of land-use plans a gradual increase in plot-ratios; in the City of London, for instance, the coefficient regularly exceeds 6:1. This excessive density leads to the functional and general congestion of historic centers. Streets become gloomy, noisy corridors, and private gardens shrink to dank service yards. The result is the degradation of the concept of the traditional city itself, justifying the exodus to the suburbs.

If authorities allow developers to exceed the critical point of five floors, the value of building plots rises astronomically, which in turn creates more pressure for higher and higher densities. It is a vicious circle, which, in the long term, leads to an insidious "Manhattanism" and represents the financial over-exploitation of the land of the city whose unavoidable structural bankruptcy must in the end be paid for by public funds. Conservation areas are, by definition, those areas that have achieved optimum density in both form and appearance. It is irresponsible and unjustifiable nonsense to increase plot-ratios in these sectors. Such decisions ensure that the real estate value of a listed building becomes indefensible in face of the potential added value of denser redevelopment. Consequently, increases in plot-ratios regularly defeat even the staunchest conservation policies.



A

EXISTING STREET PATTERN

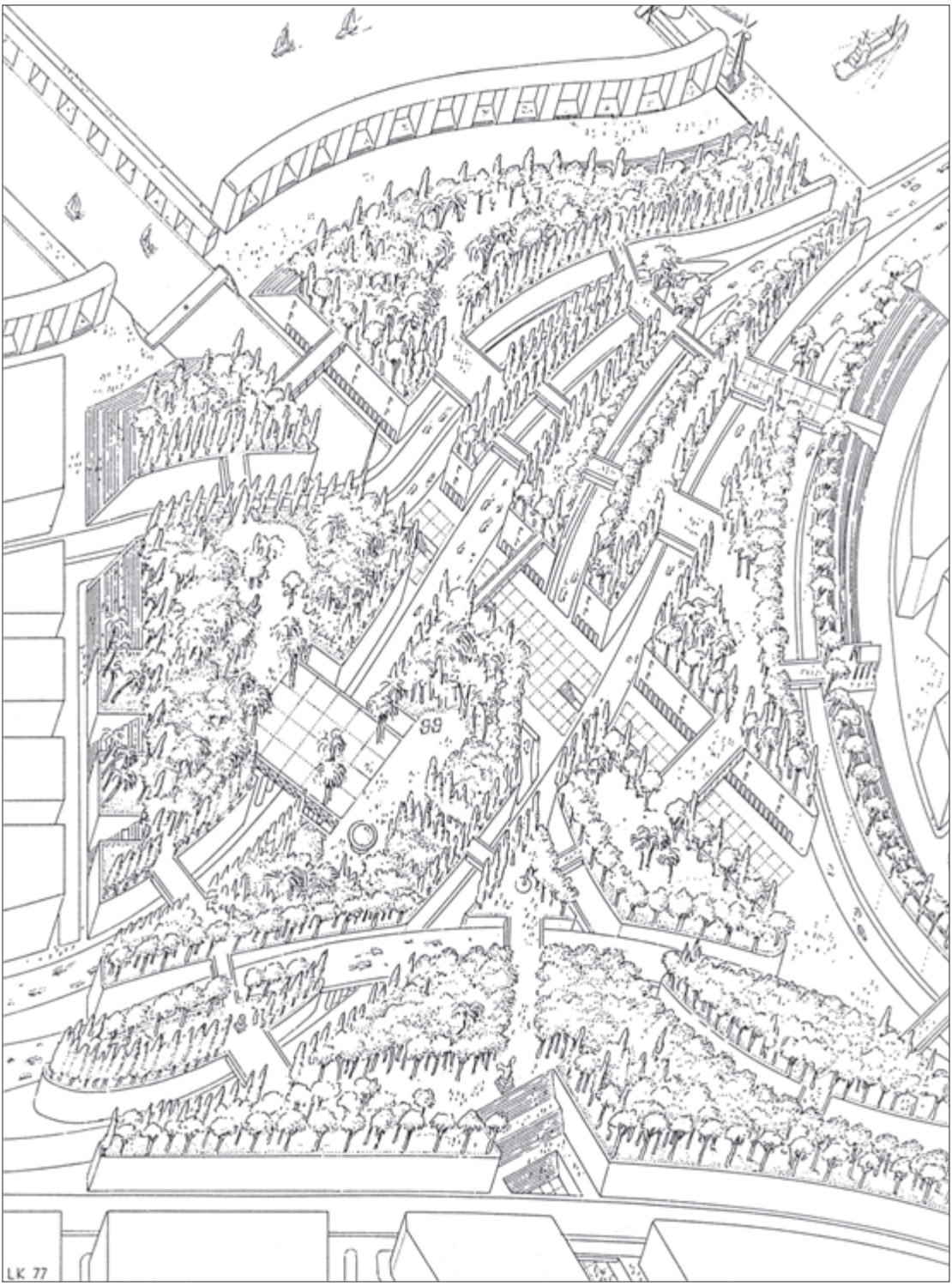
Historic centers such as this are routinely transformed into commercial zones and car-parking areas. The circulation is channeled in a one-way system round the old ramparts. Suburban houses and business zones then sprawl out into the countryside. One-way streets with cul-de-sacs branching off them form macrocellular grids that cause maximum congestion, psychological confusion, and disorientation.

B

PROPOSED STREET PATTERN

Through-traffic runs at a tangent to the town and its redefined quarters. A new square is created at the center of each quarter. Institutional, commercial, and industrial premises located at the edge of each quarter are serviced by boulevards and avenues. New two- and three-storey buildings complete any underdeveloped and fragmented blocks. A new micro-cellular street and pedestrian pattern is also created.

MASTERPLANNING SKETCH FOR DIEKIRCH, LUXEMBOURG, L.K., 1984.
These outline studies were made for the Ministry of Public Works, elaborating a set of systematic responses to problems caused by urban bypasses, the aim being to limit the expansion of medium-sized towns and villages without reducing their responsibilities for growth and development.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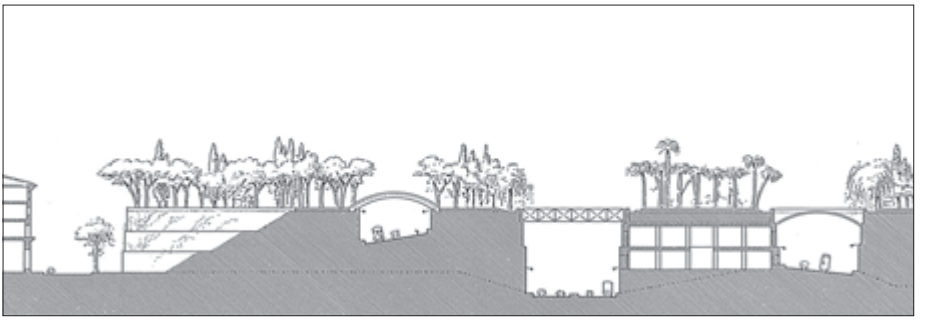
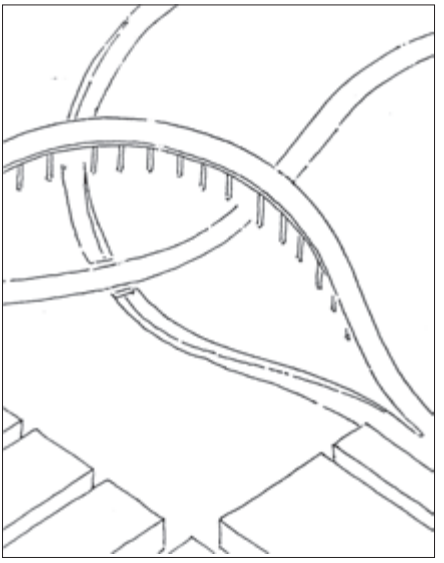
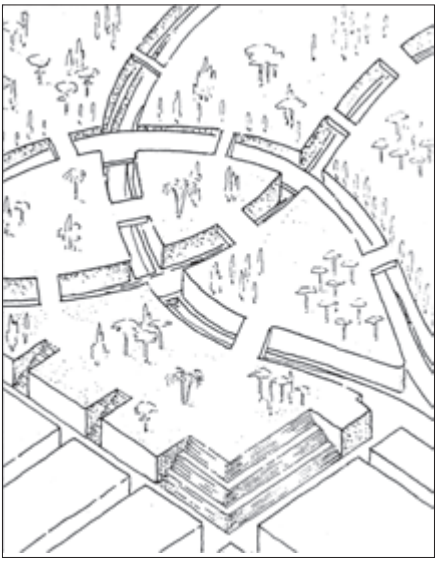
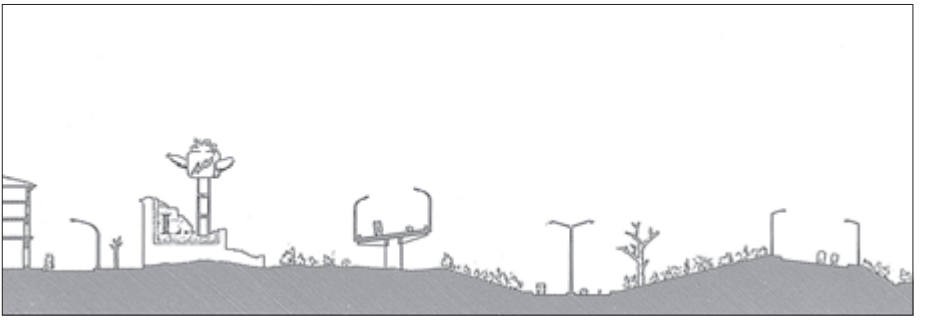








ATHENS PIRAEUS, L.K., 1977.
Project for a public park at a motorway intersection. Large terraces framed by megalithic stone walls form a wooded archipelago at roof level commanding panoramic views of the Bay of Piraeus from the upper platform. They are linked by pedestrian bridges over noisy canyons of motorway traffic. The distant skyline of the Acropolis is visible from the wide esplanade at ground level.

ARTIFICIAL LIGHTING OF PUBLIC SPACES

The impressive quantity of artificial lighting that every night floods cities, villages, and countryside could transform them into fairyland places simply by following the example of Christmas illuminations. The historic experiments of André Granet and, more recently, the work of Yan Kersalé reveal that even buildings with no aesthetic quality can temporarily assume an air of magic and glamour. Unfortunately, artificial lighting has become a massive phenomenon, the consequences of which we suffer rather than enjoy. Curiously, it is a subject that remains outside democratic debate, controlled by commercial interests often supported by bogus arguments of economy and security.

With respect to the lighting of towns and villages, two subjects should be discussed: the quality and the quantity of light, and the quality and quantity of lighting points.

At present there are on the market white, greenish, and orangey lights with comparable output as far as intensity, duration, and cost are concerned. The aesthetic choice is therefore not only possible, but necessary, and of the utmost urgency for it is the only valid choice. The cost argument in favor of the universal use of orange sodium lights is no longer justified. The orange-amber of sodium vapors eliminates colors, flattens contrasts, destroys character, and bathes even the most beautiful place in standardized gloom, confusing castles, airports, villages, and prisons. Domestic white lighting, on the other hand, has advantages from the point of view of both security and aesthetics. It does not transform the colors of people, buildings, earth, or trees but on the contrary reveals the intrinsic character and beauty of a site.

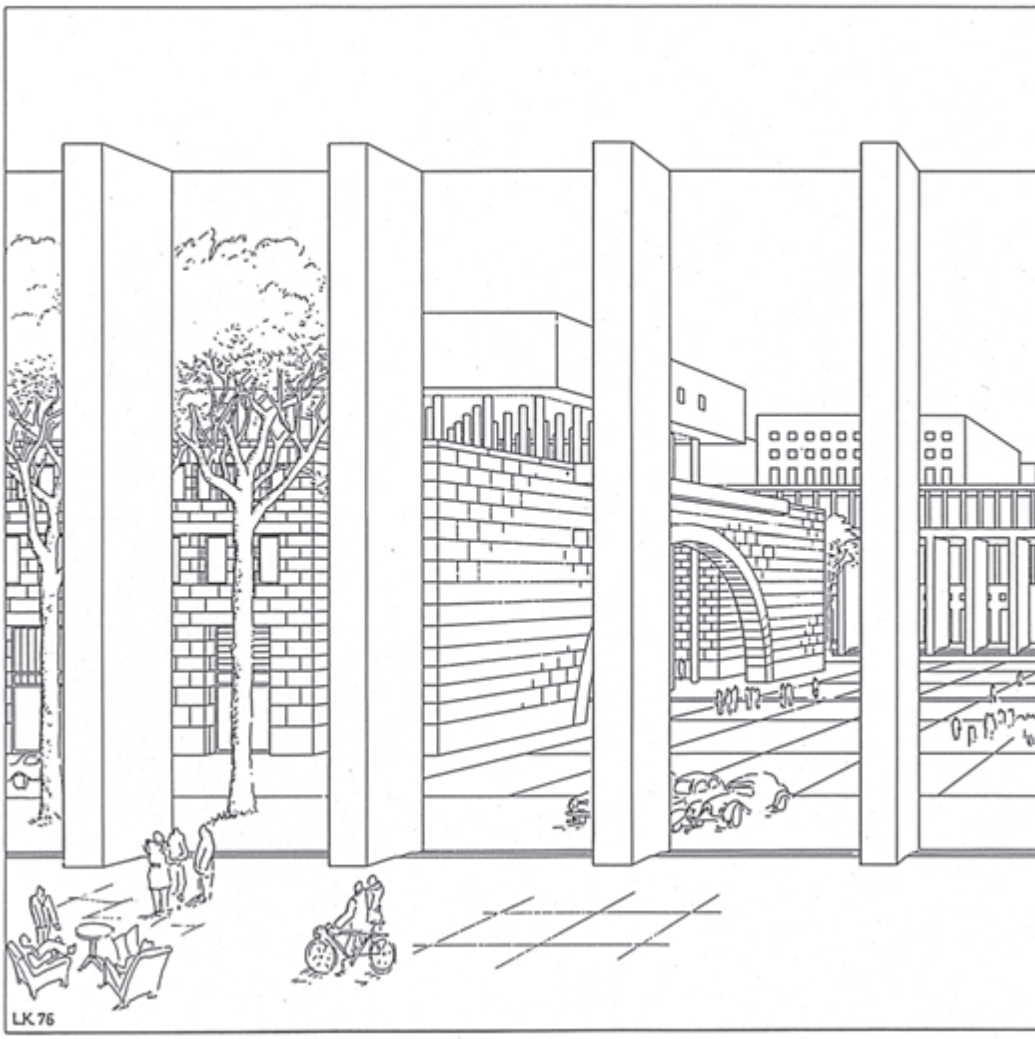
The eye adapts easily to artificial lighting levels, even very low intensity ones, as proved by the subdued illuminations of the Federal City in Washington and of most wealthy North American residential suburbs where incandescent lights of less than 50 watts create an unparalleled atmosphere of serenity, security and quality, allowing spectacular contrasts by floodlighting landmark buildings, fountains, and trees and yet retaining the sparkle of the starry night sky.

In fact, the very intense, colored lights (more than 100 watts) that are now routinely installed in Europe are acceptable only as indirect reflected light, for illuminating exceptional features such as bridges, spires, or cliffs.

With respect to lighting points, insane regulations lead to overcrowding public spaces and the countryside with poorly designed, excessively high lampposts armed with blinding bulbs. The market, on the other hand, now offers traditional designs of superior aesthetic and technical quality, which enhance rather than despoil a place and in the long term ensure substantial savings.

GEORGETOWN, A NEW TOWN AT CORBEANCA COMMUNE, ILFOV COUNTY, ROMANIA
DEVELOPERS: RUPECO ENTERPRISES SRL,
ARCHITECTS & PLANNERS: LK and JAMSHID SEPEHRI, SAMIR YOUNES, MEHRDAD RAHBAR

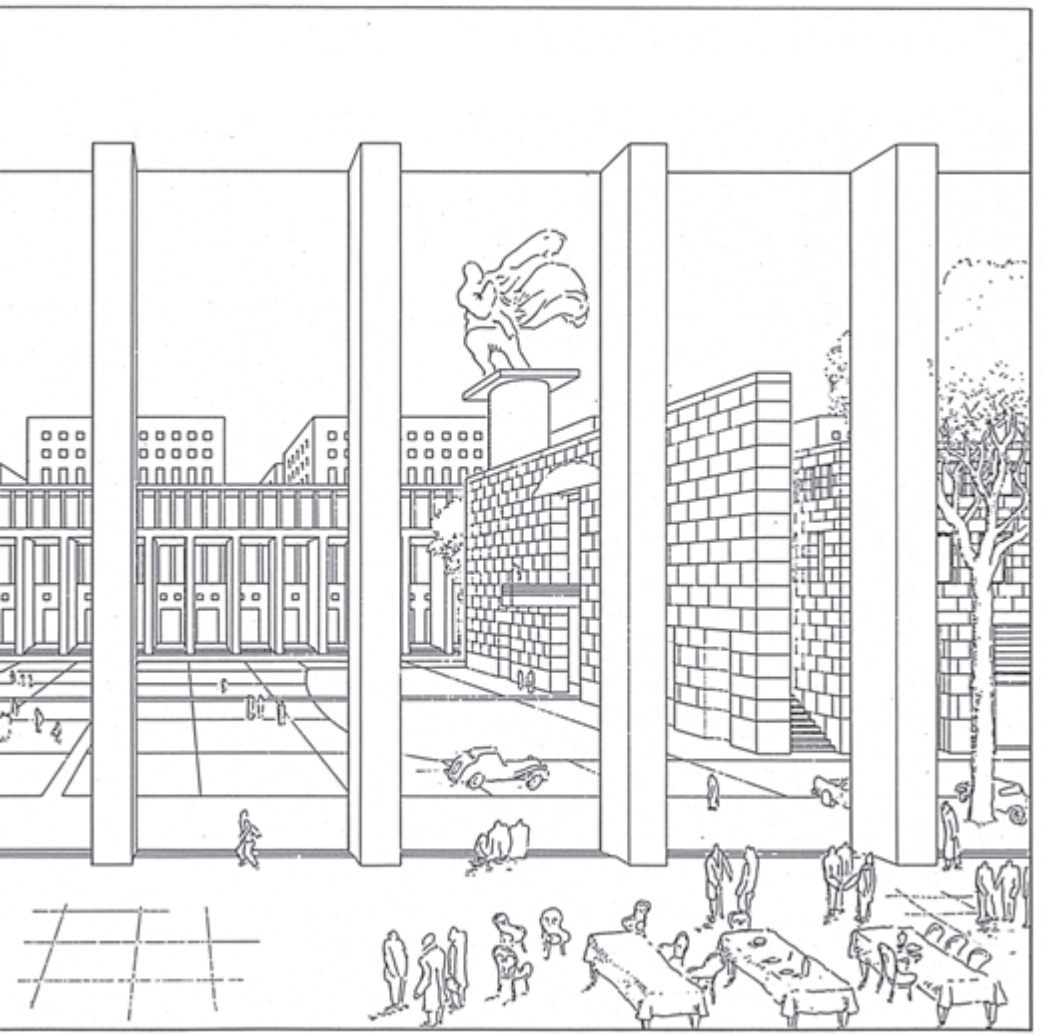
From an economic and ecological perspective, very important energy savings can be made without any loss of safety by, on the one hand significantly reducing required lighting levels and, on the other switching off a great number of lights late at night; by the systematic non-illumination of highways and country roads. In fact, motorway lighting must be considered as a pure and simple waste: it is an aesthetic disaster and, from the point of view of road safety, transitions between lit and unlit stretches of road represent high risk zones in rain and fog. Uniform lighting is of paramount importance for highways; non-illumination presents the maximum level of homogeneity and hence security for circulation. The attractiveness and safety of inhabited places do not depend on the quantity of artificial lighting but on the urban quality of the place and on the quality of its illuminations.

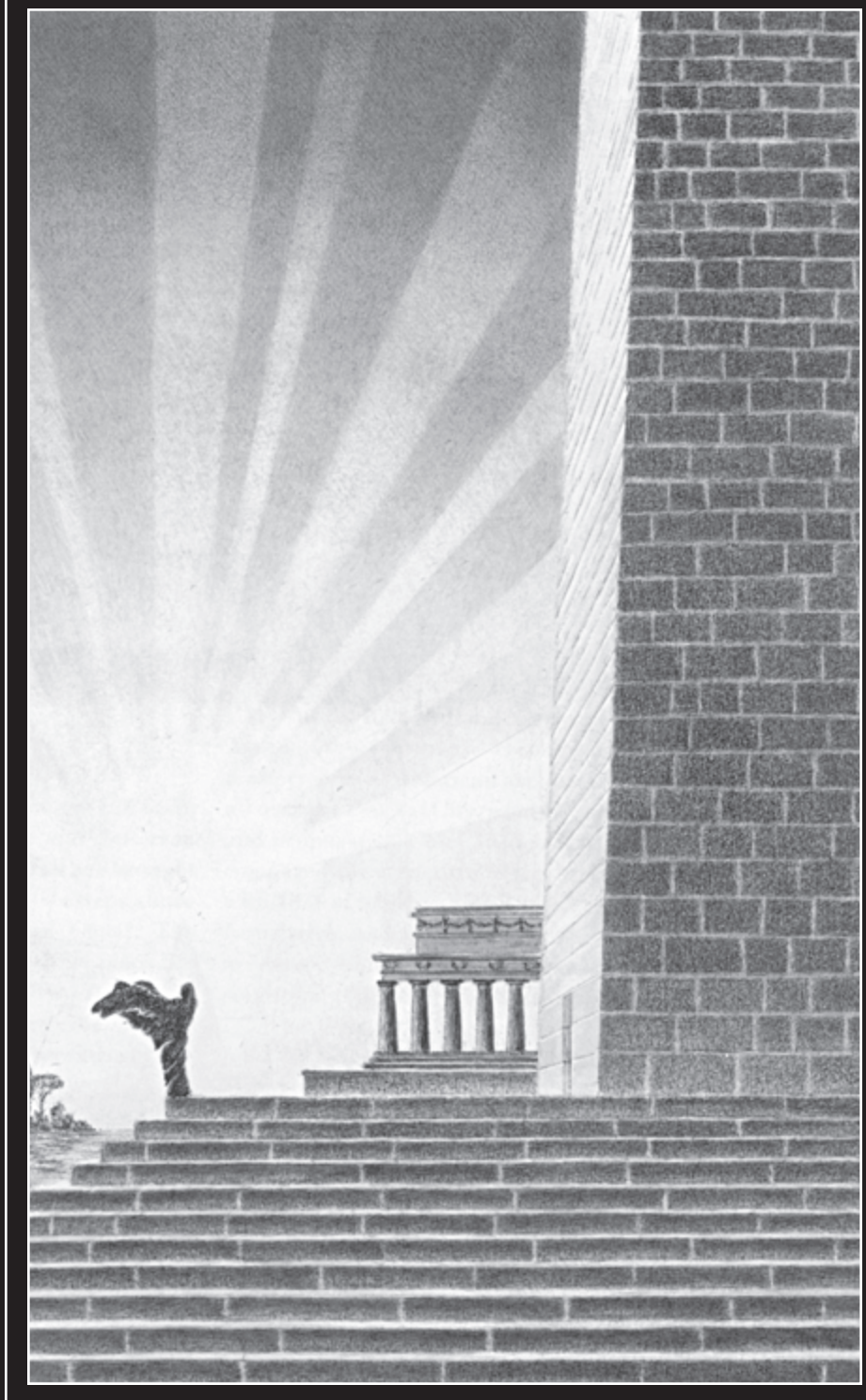


These two factors represent much more than utilitarian equipment or trivial detail; they are essential tools for ensuring the quality and character of a town.

To sum up, the purpose in outlining the organizing principles of the polycentric city is not to limit manifestations of modernity but to create a broad framework within which the plurality and abundance of contemporary architectural expressions may find a place for coherent, complete, and independent developments.

THE NEW QUARTERS OF LA VILLETTE, L.K., 1976. View of the new square in front of the town hall located between the "Grands Boulevards Nord-Sud." 1976 International Competition Award Winner for Landscape – First Prize, and Architecture and Urbanism – Second Prize.

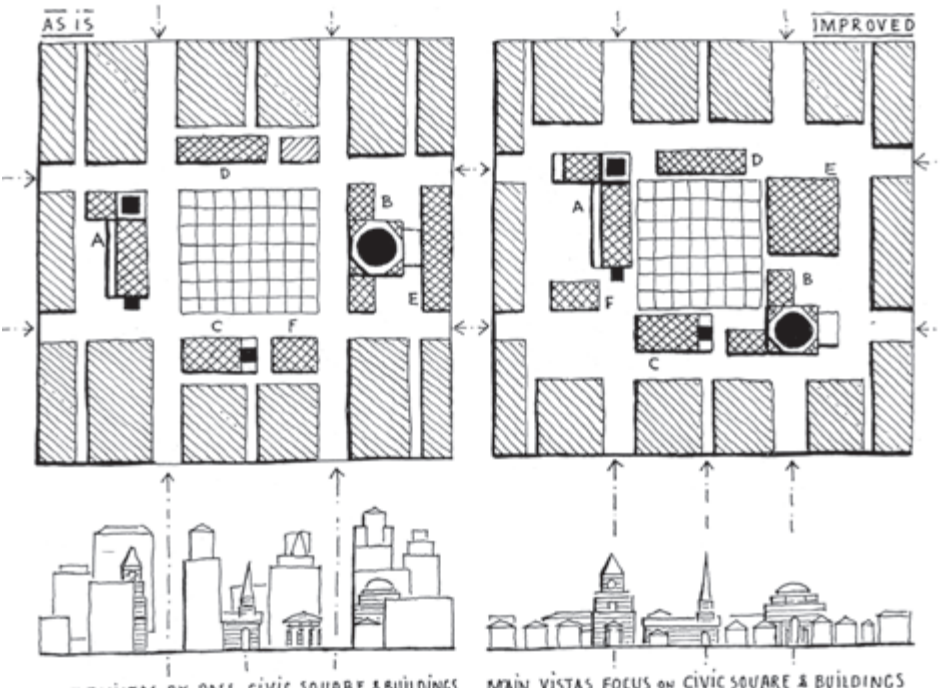


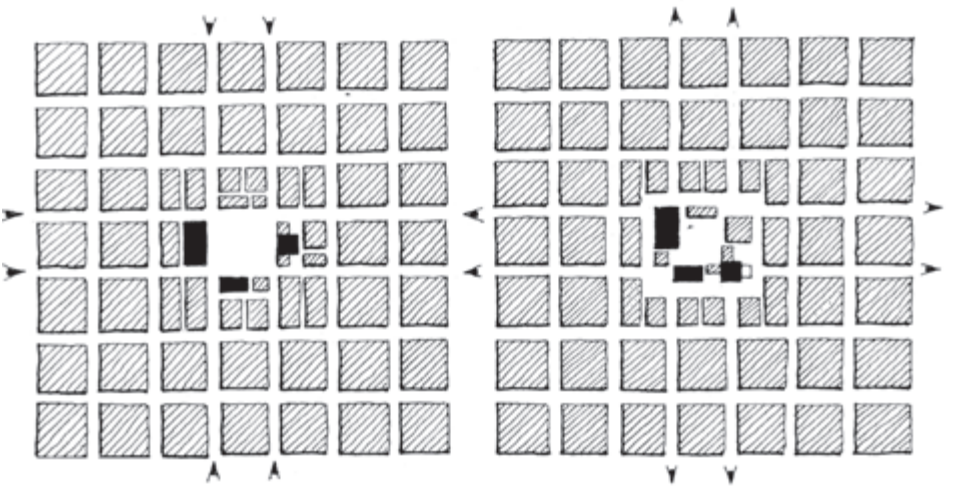


CHAPTER VI

WASHINGTON DC: AN UNFINISHED CANVAS

CENTRAL-SQUARE IN AMERICAN GRID-IRON URBAN-BLOCK PLAN

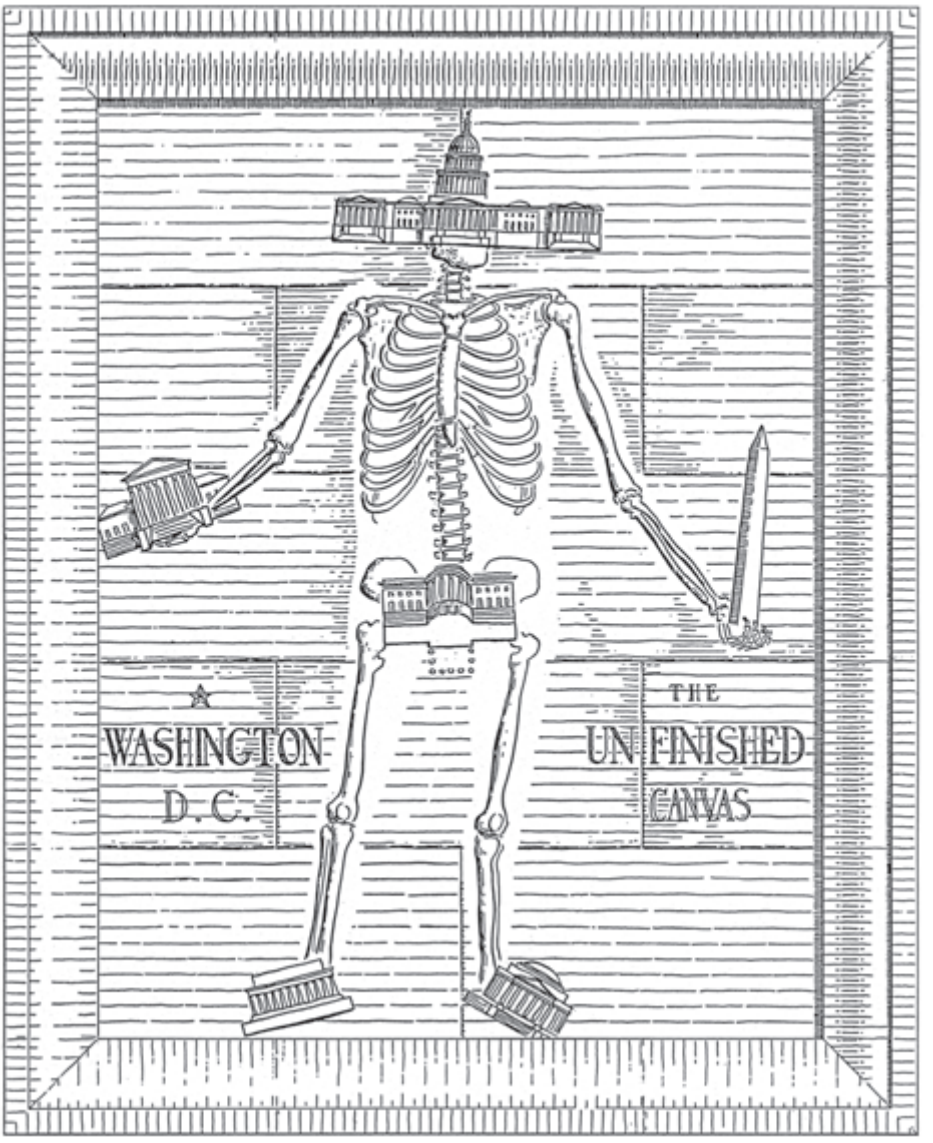




WASHINGTON DC,
A GLOBAL ECOLOGICAL RECONSTRUCTION

REBIRTH OF THE AMERICAN CITY

ON CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE
AND VERNACULAR BUILDING



For the occasion of a retrospective show of my work at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1986, Arthur Drexler, former Director of the Department of Architecture and Design at MOMA, asked me to illustrate my architectural and urban theory with a project for Manhattan. So far I had considered New York to be an interesting anomaly for which I could find neither lasting interest nor affection. I was enthused by the virility and grace of some of its buildings but oppressed by the lunacy of its scale and the poverty of its substance. The price for the rare picturesque occasions, I felt, was far too high to pay. For me it is a borderline case of architecture and urbanism. Instead, Washington, DC, even in its stricken state of the early 1980s, was for me an object of devotion, an incomplete outline of an infinitely attractive general proposition, an unfinished canvas whose completion became for me a calling. I worked for nine blessed months on my plan for the Federal City of Washington, District of Columbia, and dedicated it to Jaquelin Robertson, the man who instilled in me the love of that great city and country.

WASHINGTON DC,
A GLOBAL ECOLOGICAL RECONSTRUCTION

Defending our land and values against its foes and building great houses, palaces, and cities are all equally noble patriotic deeds and duties. A homeland is not just made of people and their history, but of all the things that our eyes can see, that our senses will embrace. If we cannot love them, if they do not inflame our hearts, they will lead us to hate ourselves and our fellow citizens. They will drive us to escape to faraway lands or to lose ourselves in artificial paradises in illusory and unreal worlds.

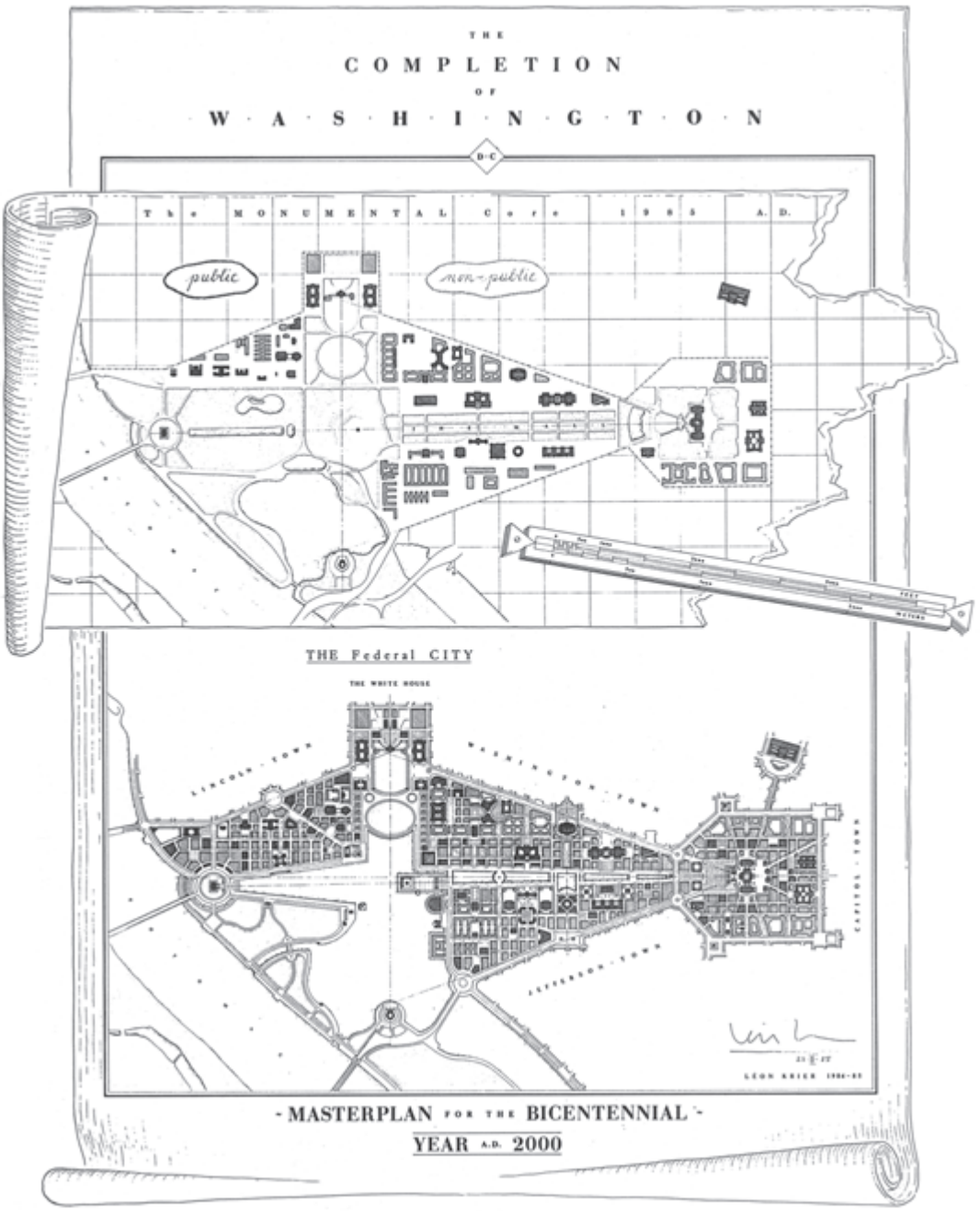
The supreme purpose of the architect is to build and maintain the homeland. A world of beautiful landscapes, of splendid cities that we will carry in our hearts and which we can long for, of places we are proud to come from, proud to inherit, and proud to bestow upon future generations.

Alas, our modern world is deeply wounded by abstract, oversized, and awkward structures that will never gain our affection. Today the very idea of homeland only survives unscathed in those corners where industrial modernism has not completely established its empire. An "industrial homeland" is indeed a contradiction in terms.

A half century of modernism and two millennia of traditional architecture stand now side by side to be compared and to be judged. Only half a century ago modernist movements arrogantly claimed to have in their grasp the final solution for all environmental and artistic problems. In their own global triumph they have yet to prove that architecture would have been better served without such definitive experiments. Today it is tragically evident that without traditional landscapes, cities, and values our planet would be little less than a global nightmare.

As humankind is now creating greater ecological problems and disasters than it is able to solve, it has but two choices: either go on and face collective suicide, or make a Copernican return and cut environmental problems down to manageable sizes. Town planning and architecture largely determine how we live our daily lives, how we use our resources and time. Once one realizes that one is heading in the wrong direction it is either mad or criminal not to change course.

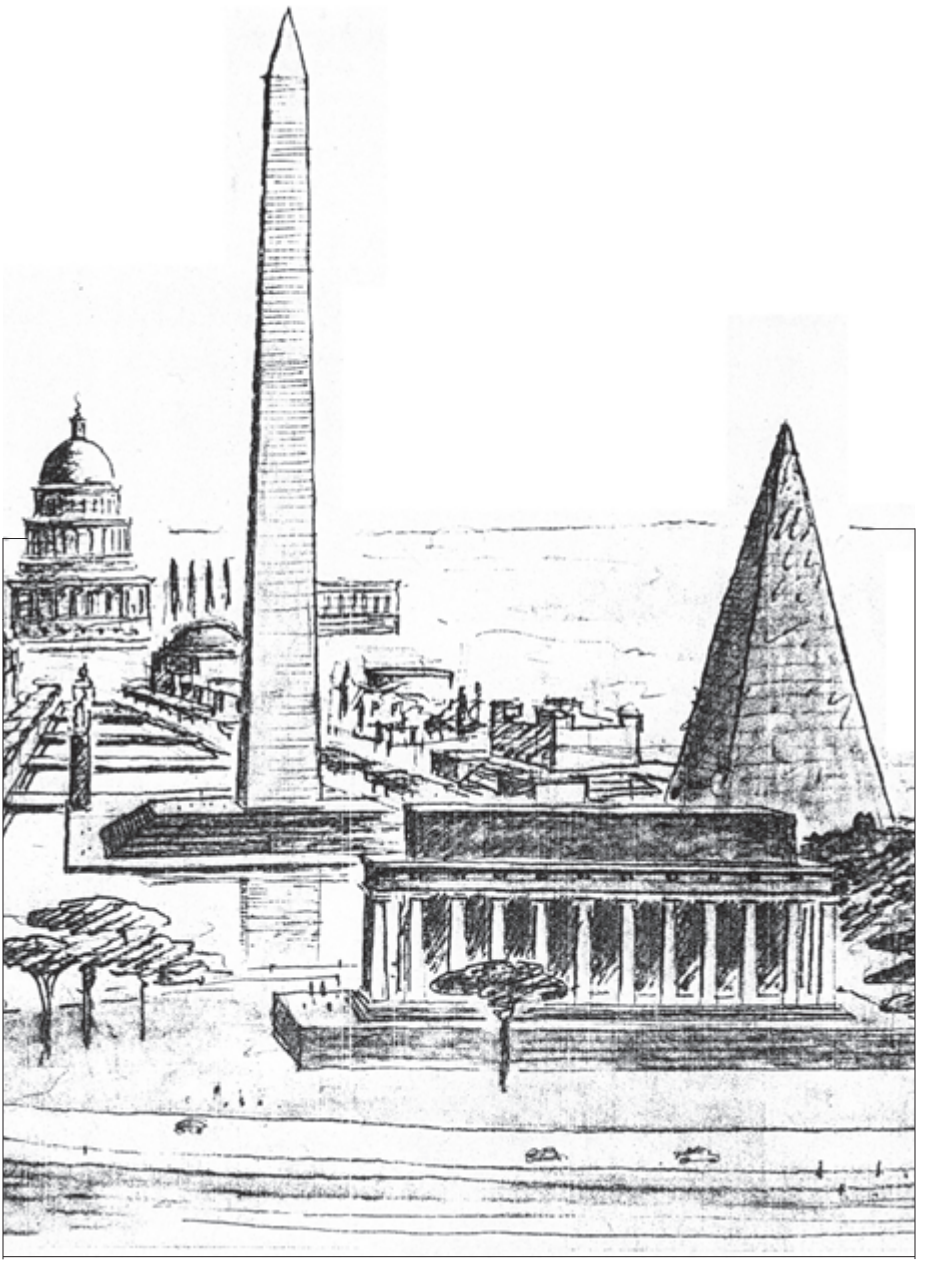
My generation is faced with a colossal and almost inhuman task of global ecological reconstruction, of relearning the timeless principles and the secular skills as artisans and artists, as foresters, farmers, and townbuilders, as legislators.

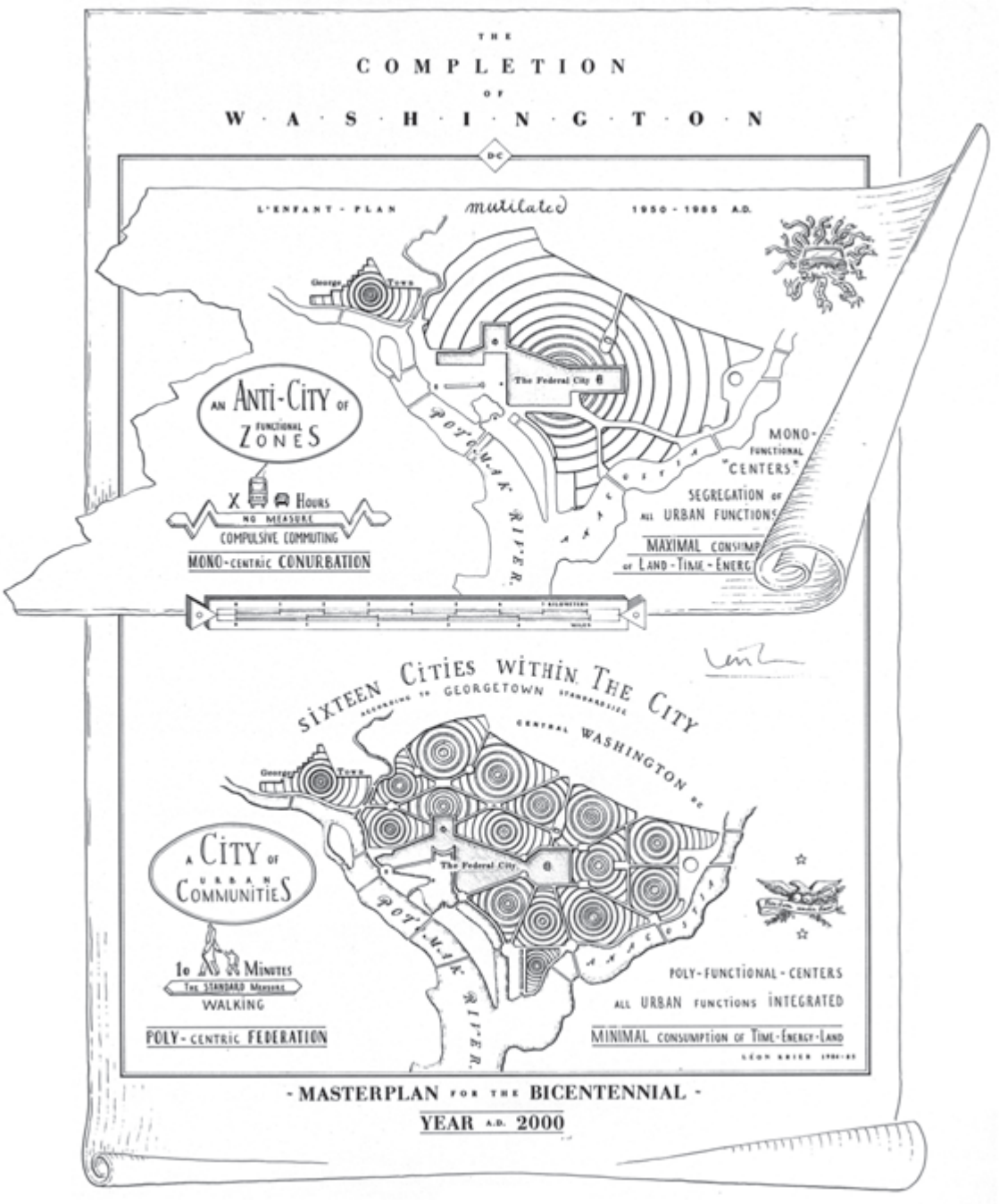


MAKE NO LITTLE PLANS, THEY HAVE NO MAGIC TO STIR MEN'S BLOOD, AND PROBABLY THEMSELVES WILL NOT BE REALIZED. MAKE BIG PLANS; AIM HIGH IN HOPE AND WORK, REMEMBERING THAT A NOBLE, LOGICAL DIAGRAM ONCE RECORDED WILL NEVER DIE, BUT LONG AFTER WE ARE GONE WILL BE A LIVING THING, ASSERTING ITSELF WITH EVER GROWING INSISTENCY, REMEMBER THAT OUR SONS AND GRANDSONS ARE GOING TO DO THINGS THAT WOULD STAGGER US. LET YOUR WATCHWORD BE ORDER AND YOUR BEACON BEAUTY.

DANIEL H. BURNHAM

Although to be successful this grandest of enterprises will have to become the goal of a whole people, it requires at first the concord and leadership of a handful of individuals, the total dedication of a nation's best minds. Their determination, their moral temerity and good sense must equal nothing less than the legendary virtues of America's founding fathers.





The principles of functional zoning and planning are in irreconcilable contradiction to the organic and artistic principles of L'Enfant's Plan.

While paying lip service to its marginal aspects, XXth century planners have ignored the constitutional nature of the scheme and mutilated its symbolic, topographic, and social vision.

REBIRTH OF THE AMERICAN CITY

However beneficial America's achievements in law, science, and technology may have been for human civilization, the parallel export of its modern urban planning methods has been a global ecological disaster. The worldwide adoption of the American downtown, suburb, and strip model have not only laid waste the cities and landscapes of her friends and foes alike, but meant for American urban culture a historic tragedy of unprecedented dimension and gravity.

The places where the majority of American citizens go about their daily occupations are now in shocking contrast to the seductive comforts of their domestic environs. Surely the vulgarity of the commercial strip, the hostility of downtown, the unreality of the suburb, and the tyranny of compulsive commuting are not part of the good American way of life.

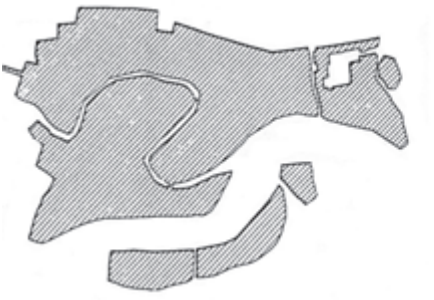
In the historic districts of Charleston, of Savannah, and of reborn Williamsburg, the United States possesses tangible examples of how small-town America wants ideally to live and what it wants to look like. The fervor with which these places are revered by their inhabitants and by countless visitors have made them not merely nostalgic national shrines of the past but desirable and attainable urban models of the future.

No such emblematic models exist so far for the great metropolitan centers. Where they did exist, their coherence has been shattered out of recognition by recent "urban improvement programs" and overdevelopment.

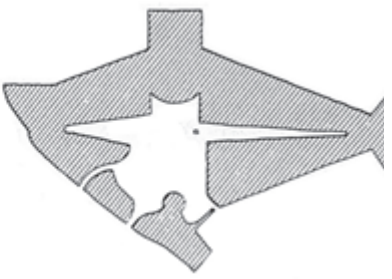
The eyes of the nation are turned toward Washington at all times. Beyond being the symbolic heart of democracy and seat of government, I believe the Federal City is destined to become the touchstone and criterion for the rebirth of urban life and culture, of civilized social intercourse, of simple grandeur and elegant simplicity. What Venice is to us, Washington will be for our children; the ultimate urban paradigm, child of heart and intellect, or art and industry. America owes it to itself and to the world.

So far Washington's monumental core is but an outline sketch of a great city to be, a grand skeleton with noble limbs but little flesh. In those hundreds of empty acres I see but an unfinished canvas, an incomplete portrait that craves for completion. The seed of this inspiring national project was placed by its founders and past builders; we must not leave it to rest before it has borne fruit.

The same enthusiasm that our parents and grandparents felt for the reach to the planets and the conquest of far horizons now fills us for the rebirth of urban



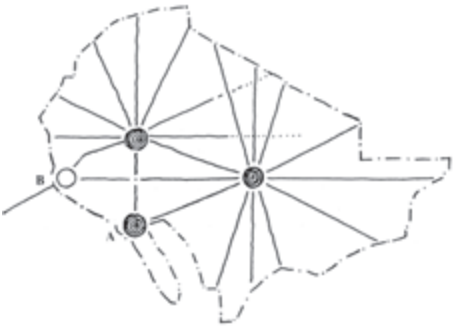
1850 A.D. – VENICE



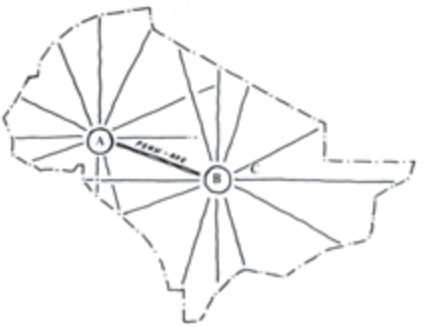
2000 A.D. – FEDERAL CITY

culture and life. The Bicentennial Master Plan for the completion of the Federal City merely hints at the undiscovered treasures that lie buried in the ground of America's national capital. The master plan is to the shaping of a city what a constitution is to the life of people. It is of both a topographical and moral nature: a good master plan will allow humans to satisfy all their material and spiritual needs and ambitions within walking distance. It will not promote any one of them at the expense of the others.

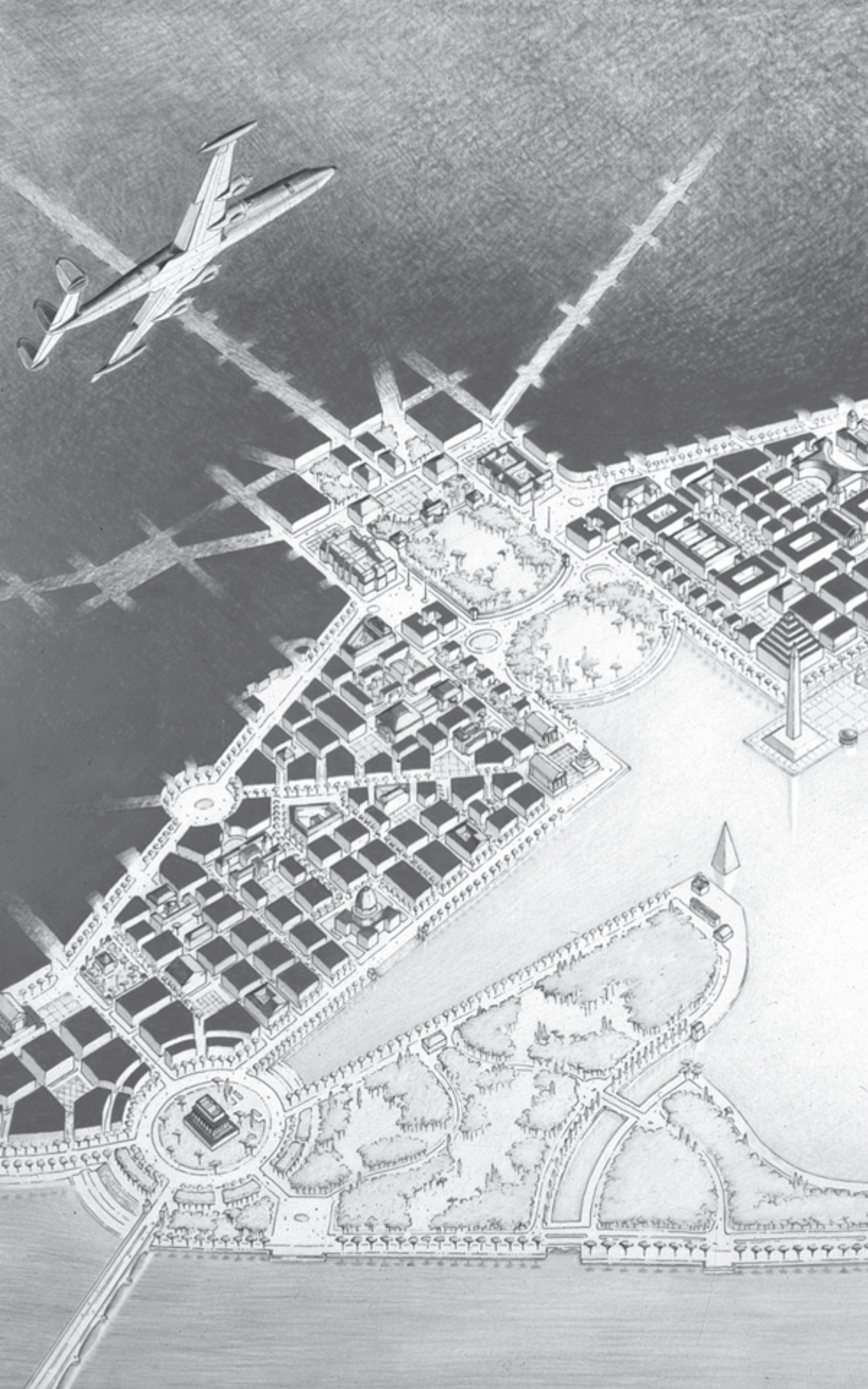
The master plan of a city must be good independently of its architecture, people, and vegetation, because not even the best buildings or gardens can redeem a bad master plan or change a suburb into a city. Conversely not even the worst intent or taste will be able to erase the beneficial order of a good master plan, or pervert a true town to become a mere downtown business or shopping district. The intent to corrupt a master plan is as grave a crime as the aim to subvert the constitution of a people.



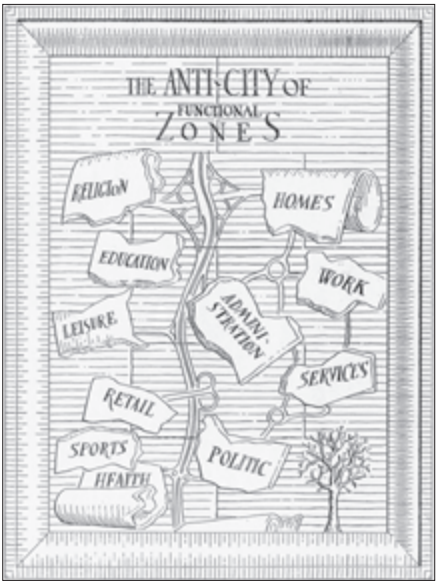
A or B: Ideal locations for Supreme Court according to J. W. Reps.



White House (A) and Capitol (B) as centers of converging avenues. (C) Site of the existing Supreme Court

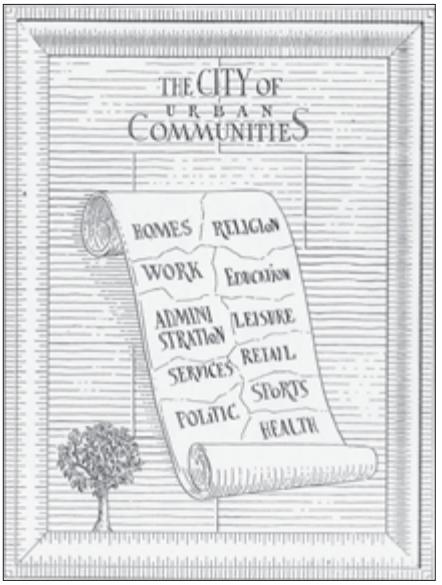


CITIES AND LANDSCAPES ARE THE TANGIBLE EXPRESSION OF O UR MATERIAL & SPIRITUAL WORTH FOR GOOD OR FOR ILL. THEY EX PRESS AND DEFINE HOW WE USE OR WASTE OUR RESOURCES, E NERGY TIME AND LAND. TWO SCORE YEARS OF MODERNISM AND TWO SCORE CENTURIES OF TRADITION



ARE TURNED TOWARDS WASHING TON AT ALL TIME. I BELIEVE THAT THE SYMBOLIC HEART OF DEMOCR ACY AND SEAT OF GOVERNMENT IS DESTINED TO BECOME THE CRITE RION FOR THE REBIRTH OF URBAN LIFE & CULTURE. WHAT VENICE IS TO US WASHINGTON WILL BE TO OUR CHILDREN. THE ULTIMATE URBAN PARADIGM.

AMERICA OWES IT TO HERS ELF AND TO THE WORLD. SO FA R WASHINGTONS MONUMENTA L CORE IS BUT AN OUTLINE SKETCH OF A GREAT CITY TO BE A GRAND SKELETON WITH NOBLE LIMBS BUT LITTLE FLESH. IN THOSE HUNDREDS OF EMPTY ACRES I SEE BUT AN UNFINISHED CANVAS AN INCOMPLETE PORTRAIT



STAND TO BE COMPARED AND TO
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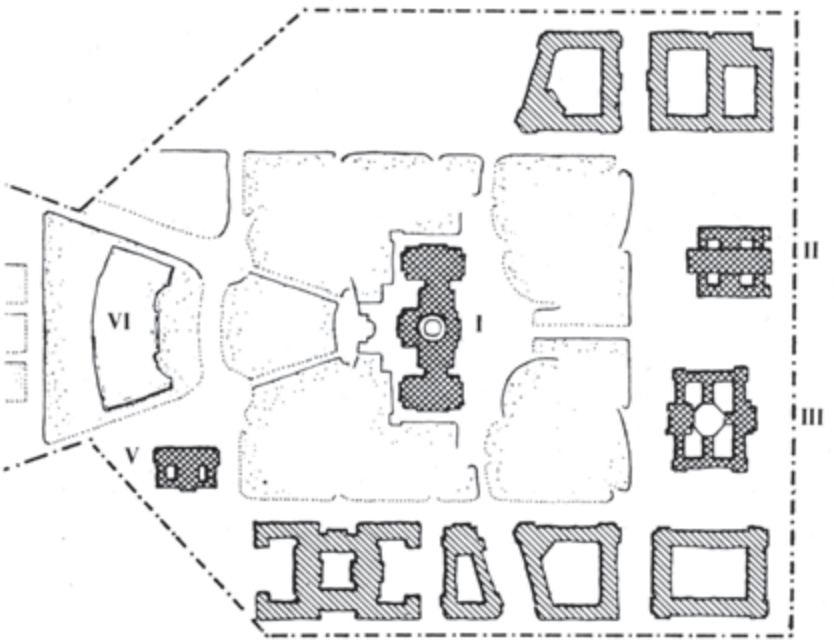
NATIONAL CAPITAL

EXISTING PUBLIC Bldg. & Monuments
PROPOSED PUBLIC Bldg. & Monuments
EXISTING NON - PUBLIC Bldg.
PROPOSED NON - PUBLIC Bldg.
LEON KRIER

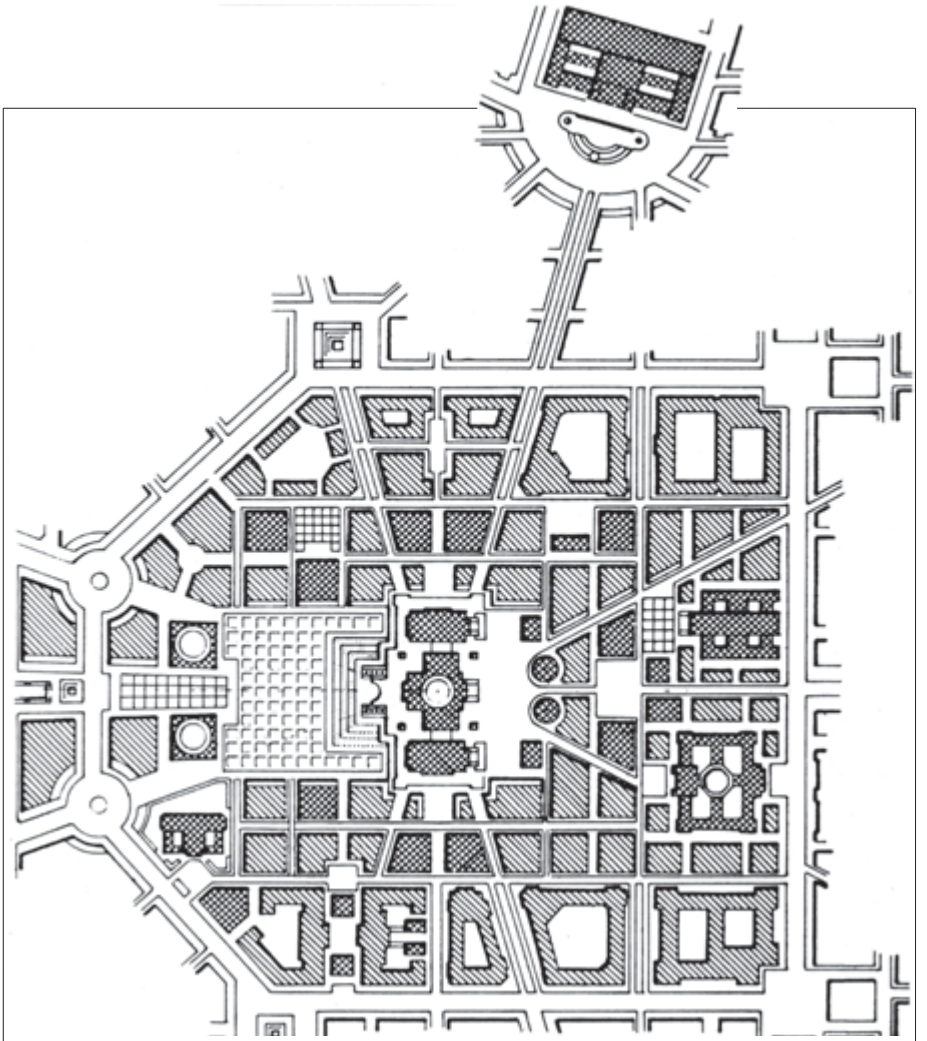
The Original Drawings for the Washington Bicentennial Master Plan 1985 are in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), New York, NY.

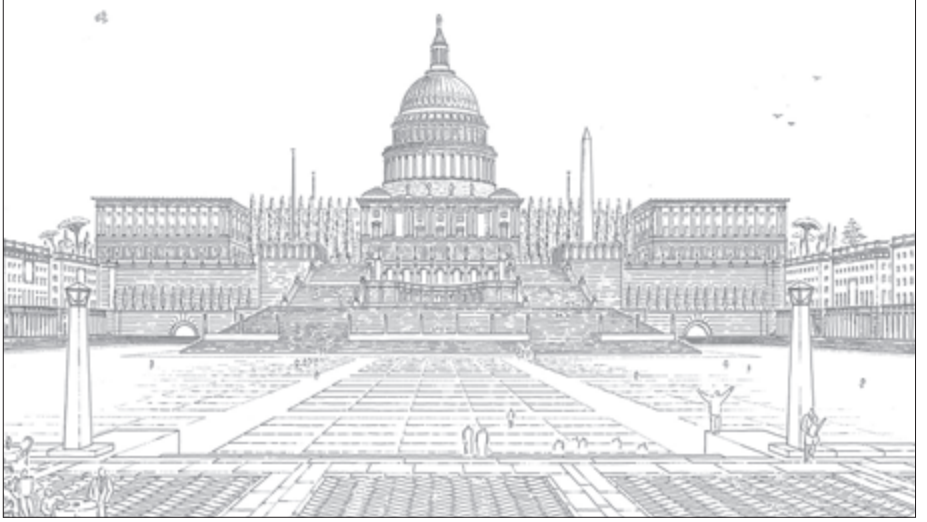
I. THE CAPITOL
II. SUPREME COURT
III. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
IV. UNION STATION
V. US BOTANIC GARDEN
VI. GRANT MEMORIAL

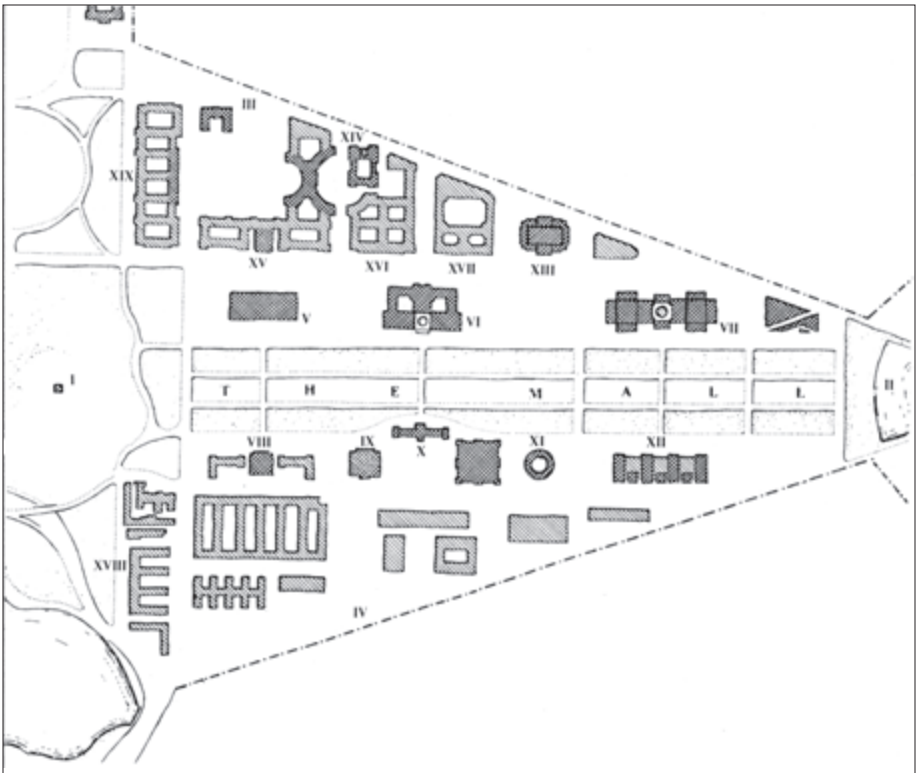


CAPITOL TOWN will be the largest division of Federal City. Some 20,000 to 30,000 people could live in this hill town in four-story high buildings and on spacious tree-lined avenues. The intimate squares in front of public buildings would increase their monumentality. Thus the square of the Supreme Court would have approximately the size of the Republican Forum in Rome; an adequate setting for the most Roman of Washington's monuments. Constitution Square on the other hand, a national square in size and character, is dug into the flanks of the Hill and dominated by the west front of the Capitol building. The facades carry large granite plaques with the texts of the Constitution of the United States and on inauguration day the square will hold 200,000 spectators. The east elevation of the Capitol is one of the most remarkable compositions in the world. The west facade, however, as viewed from the Mall, is a shapeless lump with its cupola floating like a dish on too broad a tabletop.

By planting dense rows of cypress trees into the lateral recesses, the buildings are articulated into three distinct pavilions: the Senate Chamber, the Great Rotunda, and the House Chamber. The twelve meter high pyramidial perron, rising from Constitution Square to the open exedra, reinforces the verticality of the central composition, which will form the focus of the Grand Canal. The two acroteral pyramidions will solidly ameliorate the cupola to its base. Also proposed are detailed improvements to the west portico, contributing to the current debate about its envisaged remodeling.

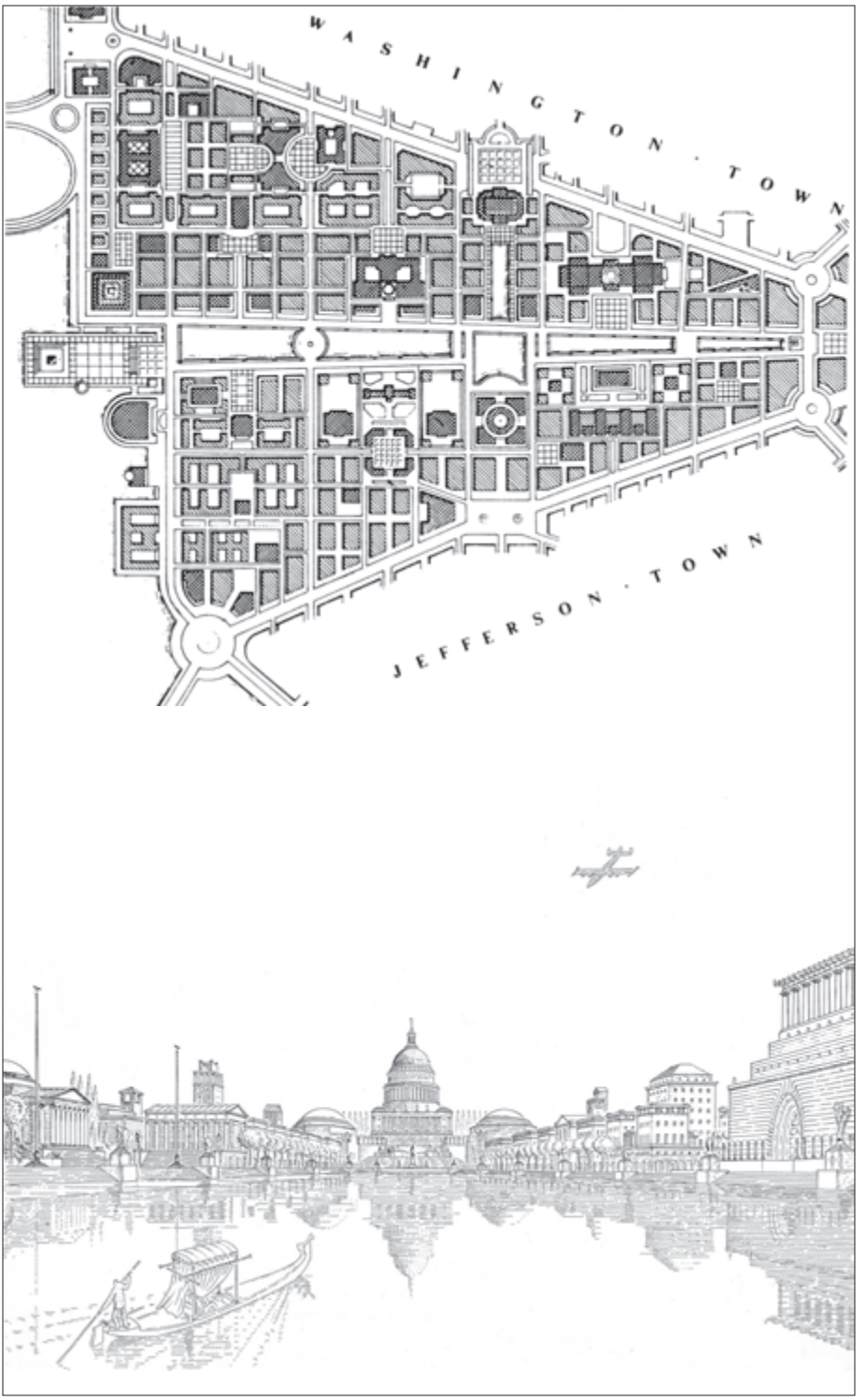


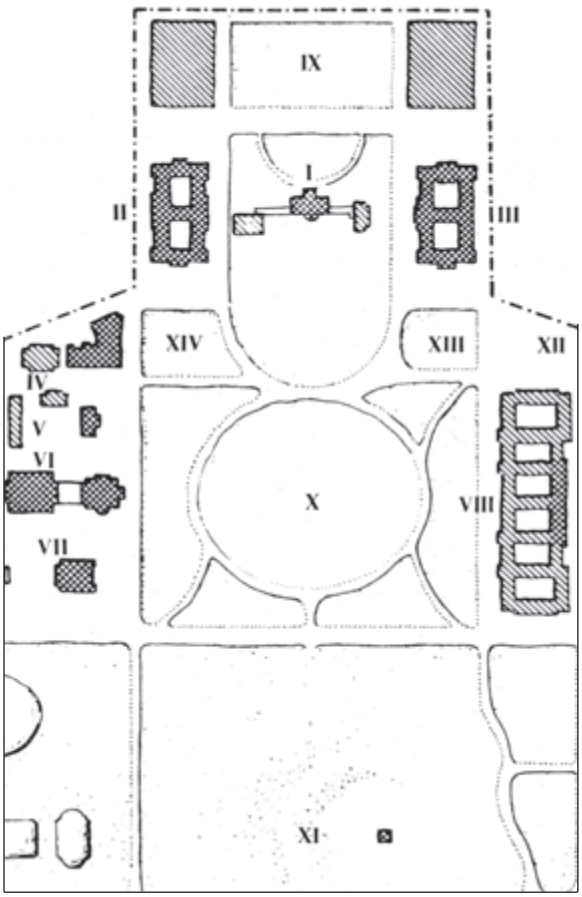




I.	WASHINGTON MONUMENT	XI.	HIRSHHORN MUSEUM
II.	GRANT MEMORIAL	XII.	AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM
III.	WESTERN PLAZA	XIII.	NATIONAL ARCHIVES
IV.	L'ENFANT PLAZA	XIV.	OLD POST-OFFICE
V.	AMERICAN HISTORY MUSEUM	XV.	DEPARTMENTAL AUDITORIUM
VI.	NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM	XVI.	INTERNAL REVENUE
VII.	NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART	XVII.	DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
VIII.	DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE	XVIII.	BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING
IX.	FREER GALLERY		
X.	SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION	XIX.	DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

WASHINGTON AND JEFFERSON TOWNS Tree-lined canals, basins, and avenues are the main characteristics of Washington Town and Jefferson Town. The levels of North and South Mall are brought down to those of Constitution Avenue, five steps above that of Pyramid Lake and Grand Canal. The considerable excavation will now effectively place the existing buildings of South Mall on a two-story high arcaded podium and rusticated terrepleins. Tower-like pavilions and hanging gardens will create a richly varied and articulate frontage while the uniform elevations of North Mall are carried on lofty and shady arcades, merely punctured by the many incoming avenues, the forecourts of the Museum of Natural History, the National Gallery, and the reflecting pool leading towards the Archives Building. The vast administrative complex of the Federal Triangle will be opened up by a number of public passages and integrated into a tight network of streets and squares. The unsightly Museum of American History will in the near future be rebuilt in the form of a stepped pyramid on Washington Square facing Pyramid Lake and the White House grounds.


WASHINGTON · TOWN
JEFFERSON · TOWN



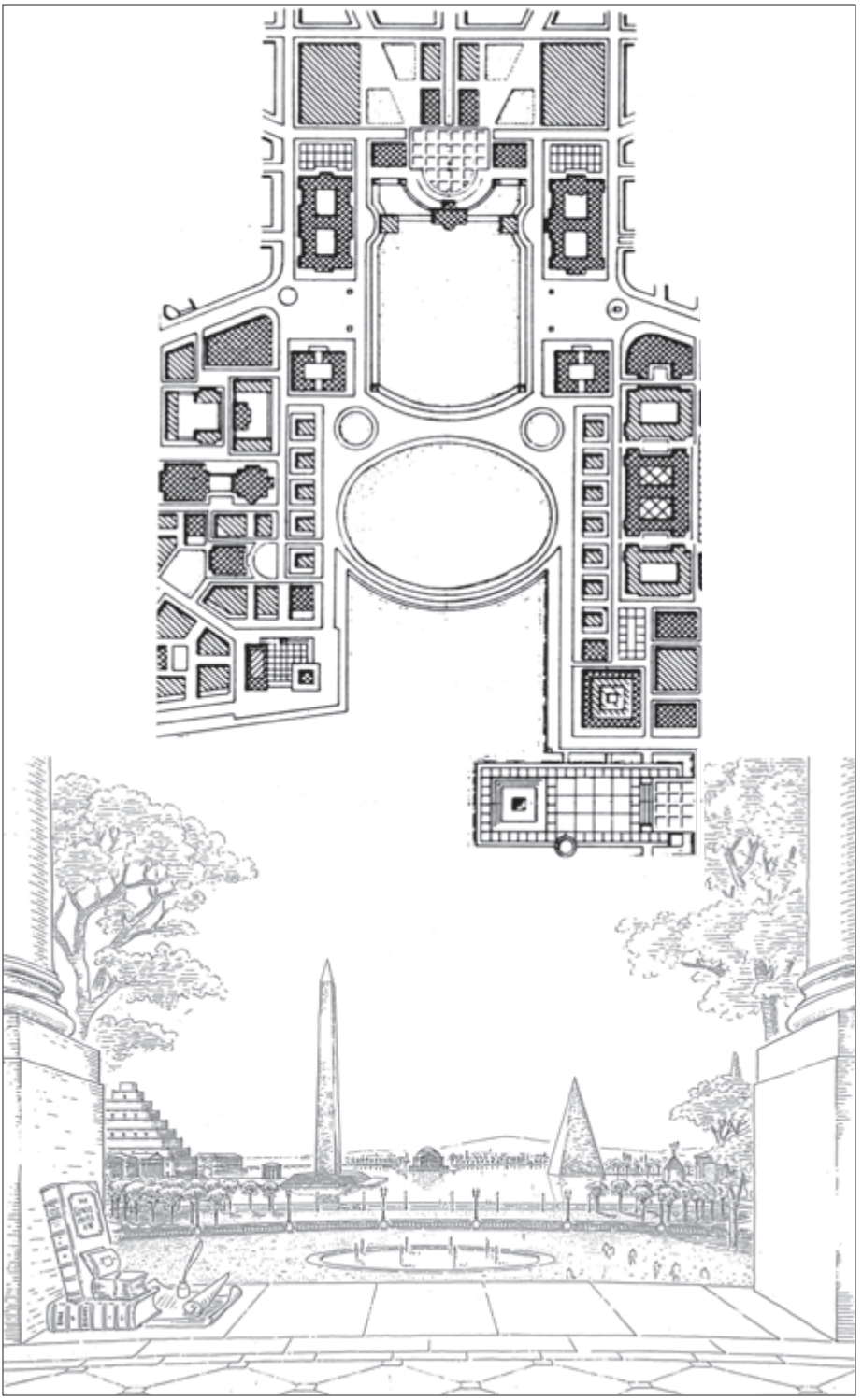
I.	WHITE HOUSE	VIII.	DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
II.	EXECUTIVE OFFICE	IX.	LAFAYETTE SQUARE
III.	TREASURY	X.	ELLIPSE
IV.	CORCORAN GALLERY	XI.	WASHINGTON MONUMENT
V.	AMERICAN RED CROSS	XII.	WESTERN PLAZA
VI.	CONSTITUTION HALL	XIII.	TREASURY PLACE
VII.	PAN AMERICAN UNION	XIV.	STATE PLACE

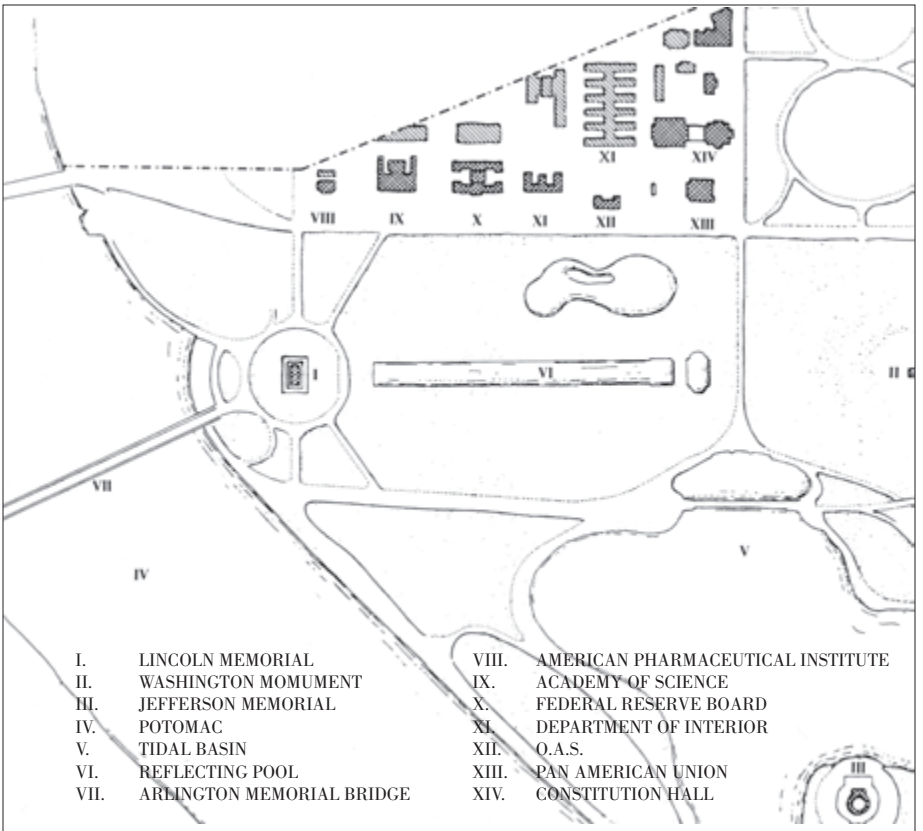
WHITE HOUSE In its present environs the White House is dwarfed by oversized government complexes.

The levels of the bordering Executive Avenue, ellipse, and exedra-forecourt are lowered and surround the President's grounds with a screen of buildings and public spaces scaled in such a way as to reestablish the White House in its symbolic prominence and to relate it effectively and sympathetically to its immediate surroundings. The termination of Pennsylvania Avenue is awkward and this is despite 40 years of debates and competitions.

The impossible marriage of "avenue" and "square" had best be forgotten. Western Plaza and its municipal arrangement would best be built over, and its trees and pavement moved elsewhere.

Treasury Place and counterpart State Place, now mere forecourts of the State and Treasury buildings, are to be the real terminals of Pennsylvania Avenue and New York Avenue.





I. LINCOLN MEMORIAL
II. WASHINGTON MOMUMENT
III. JEFFERSON MEMORIAL
IV. POTOMAC
V. TIDAL BASIN
VI. REFLECTING POOL
VII. ARLINGTON MEMORIAL BRIDGE
VIII. AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL INSTITUTE
IX. ACADEMY OF SCIENCE
X. FEDERAL RESERVE BOARD
XI. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR
XII. O.A.S.
XIII. PAN AMERICAN UNION
XIV. CONSTITUTION HALL

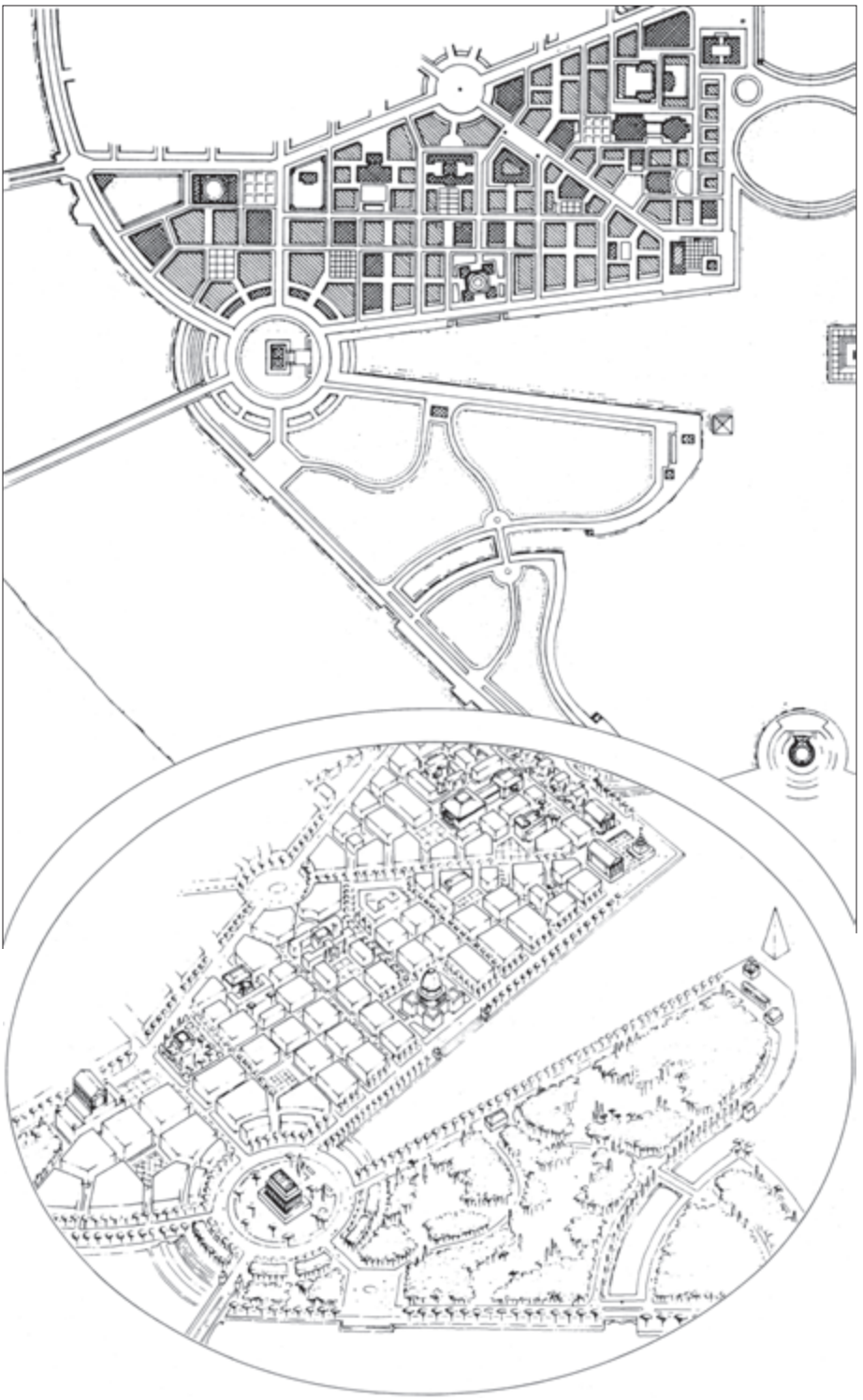
LINCOLN TOWN will have the atmosphere of an elegant resort town, its major avenues leading from the existing white-marble palaces down towards Pyramid Lake.

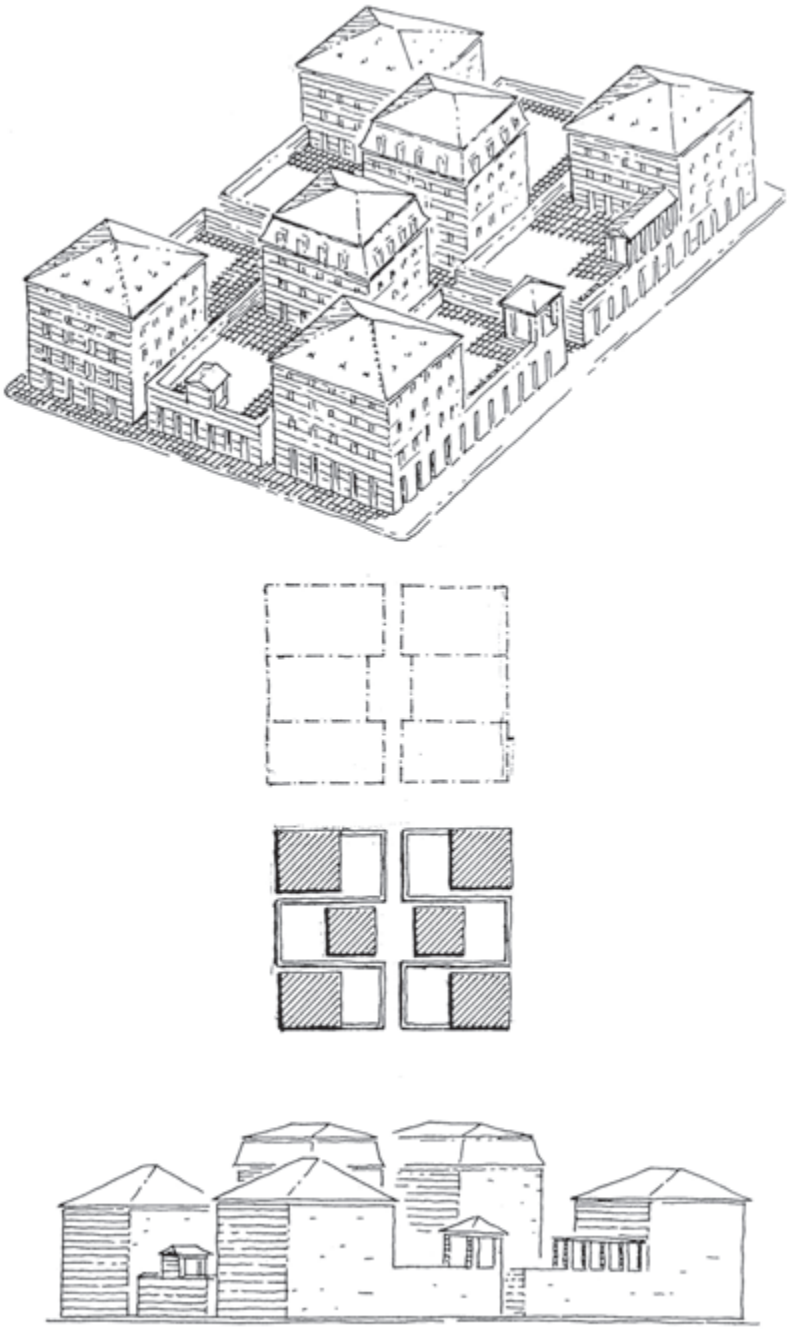
For the recreation of New York Avenue, the demolition of several large modernist office blocks is necessary. These oversized labyrinths have become functional and political anachronisms, left-overs of a bygone age. Their functions will be relocated in a number of strong buildings.

As in the case of the proposed re-erection of R. M. Hunt's 1893 Administration Building on Lake Avenue, the systematic reconstruction of vanished masterpieces of American architecture and sculpture, all over the Federal City, would be actively encouraged and propagated. Chief Justice Warren E. Burger has compared the structure of the American constitution with that of a three-legged stool. The Executive, the Legislative, and the Judicial branches being the three necessary and sufficient supports to maintain the solidity of the political and moral edifice.

The City of Washington has been conceived from its beginnings both as symbol and instrument of that precise idea of constitution, it is surprising that the Supreme Court, as the seat of judicial power, should never have found a suitable location.

L'Enfant's plan situates the President's House and the Capitol in the foci of converging avenues, but merely mentions en passant *a site for the Supreme Court. On its present address on Capitol Square and Maryland Avenue it forms but an unequal pendant to the Library of Congress, symbolically a mere annex to the Capitol.*





LINCOLN TOWN BLOCK – As pioneered in historic Charleston, the block allows neither front or back gardens but instead the gardens lie between houses. The street perspective is richly articulated with sheer house fronts, garden walls, fences, arcades, terre-pleins, gazebos, and pergolas.

ON CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE AND VERNACULAR BUILDING

All worthy architectural cultures make a fundamental difference between sacred and public structures on one hand and private utilitarian structures on the other. The former express the dignity, solemnity, and grandeur of collective institutions, res sacra-res publica, the latter the more modest rank of individual activities and zeal, res private-res economica. All buildings are at once expressive and instrumental for good or for ill.

Classical architecture in all cultures and continents is to vernacular building what poetry is to prose. The power and value of classicism are given substance through this contrast in scale, dimension, and artistic elaboration. Too much of it is a false luxury and too little a false economy.

We do not use the term "classicism" as a stylistic classification. In the face of modernism the old polemic between Gothic and classic is largely irrelevant.

Classicism embraces all monumental architecture (of all continents) of traditional construction and conception, fulfilling the Vitruvian triad. The work of Henry Bacon and that of Hassan Fathy belong in that classification, as do the Eiffel Tower and the Crystal Palace. The latter are neither anti-historical nor anti-classical or anti-traditional structures. They merely represent new additions to the vast typological and formal repertoire of the vernacular-classical tradition. When, however, they are elevated to the level of paradigm, architecture is diminished.

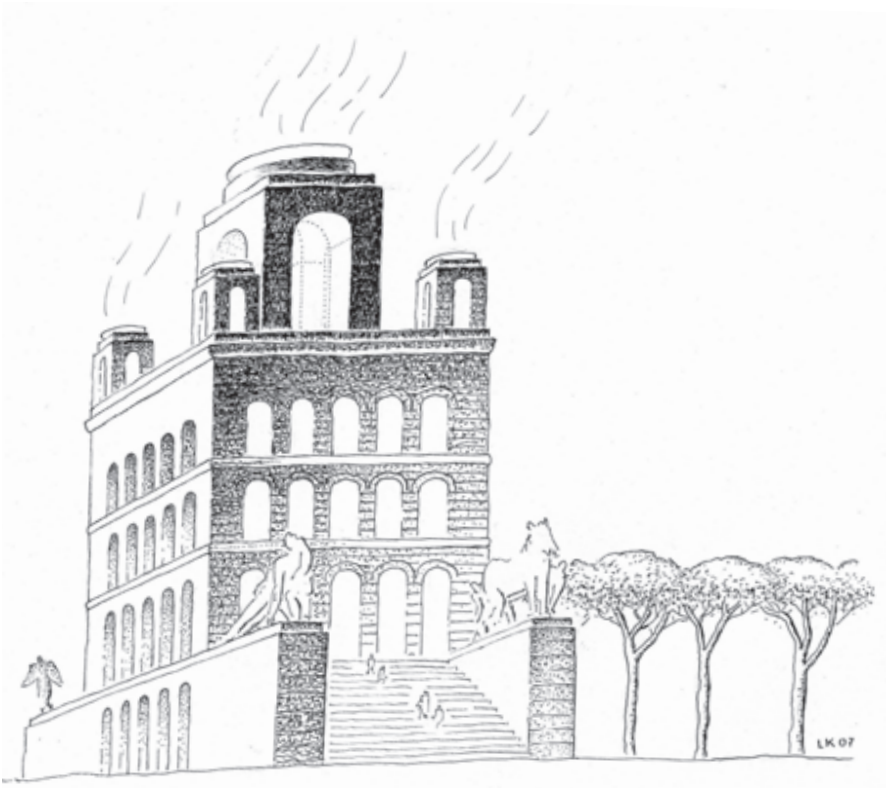
Against the mere skin depth of most post-modernist buildings, true vernacular and classical structures are wall-deep and room-deep. Authentic traditional construction and predominant use of natural materials are essential to ensure the integrity of structure, architectural elements, and appearance. A slightly higher initial investment is repaid by a longer life, by less maintenance, better appearance, and generally better building.

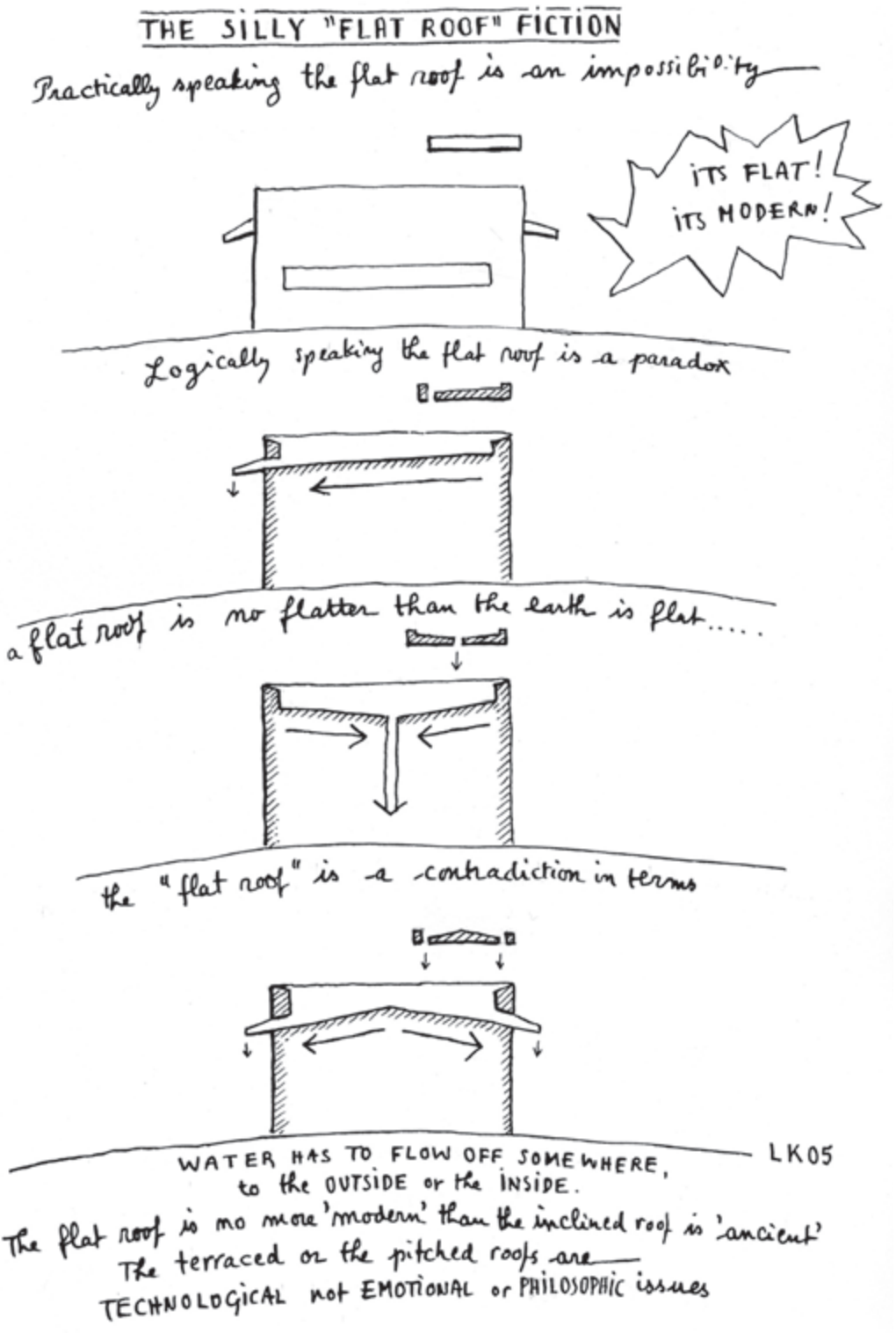
There are several ways in which classical culture and tradition are understood and misunderstood. These depend largely on our understanding of the universe and of nature; on whether we believe that progress and evolution have a finality or not, whether their goal has been reached in the past, or whether it will be reached in the future; and whether classical ideals can belong to the world of matter or only to the world of ideas.

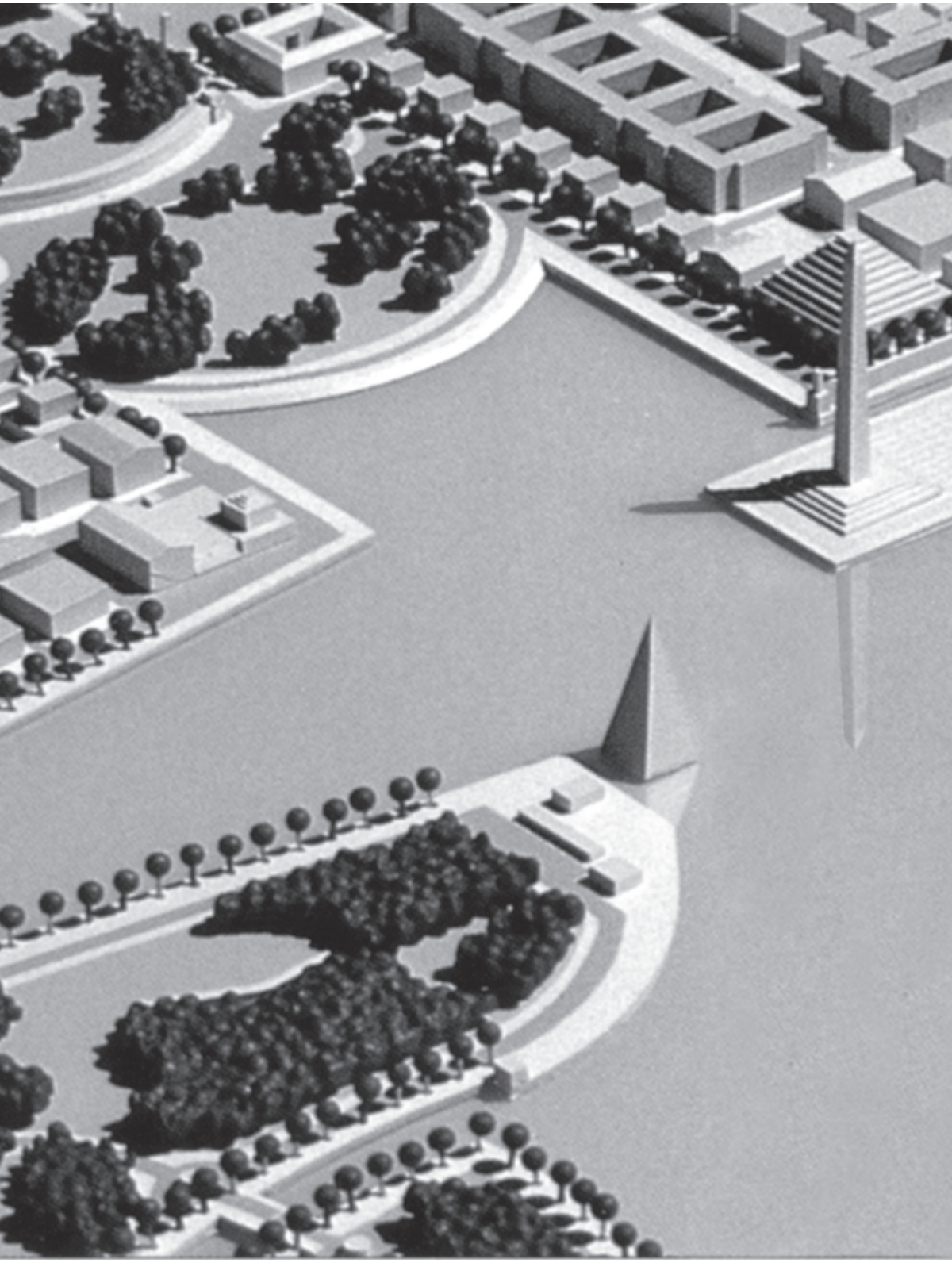
There is little doubt that organic nature has, with the creation of humankind, reached its highest possible, its classical, form. As far as humans' biological evo-

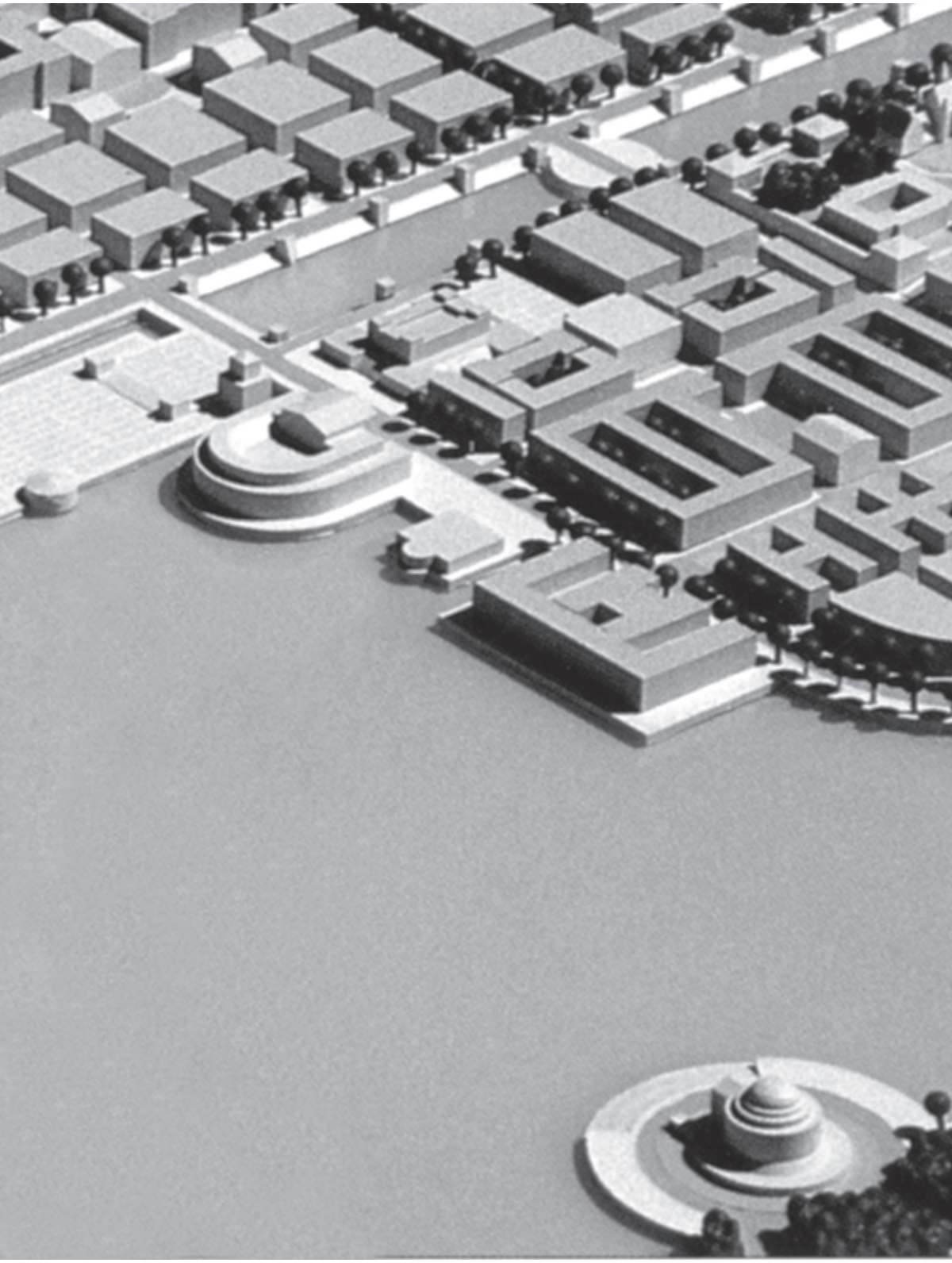
lution is concerned, progress is thus a matter of the past. The typological order that shapes the organic world will not suffer any change, for its slightest mutation will mean the instant end of humankind itself.

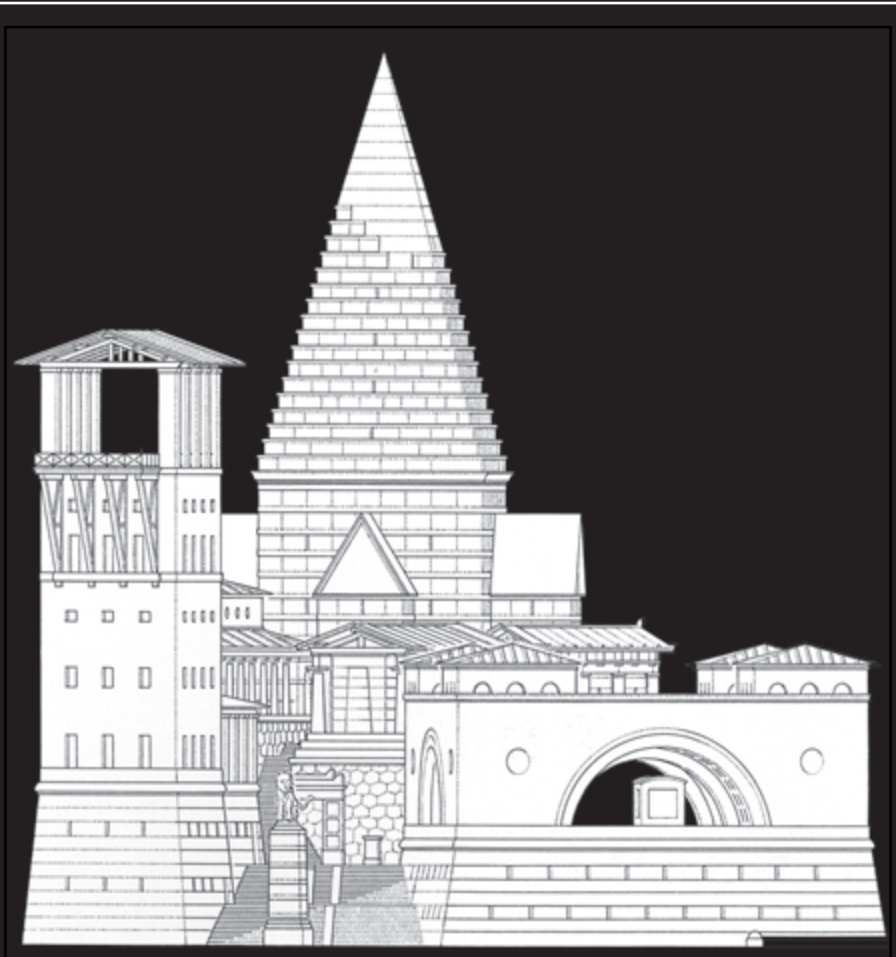
In our unavoidably anthropocentric conception of time the typological inventory of organic nature not only seems but is complete. It does not know innovation, but only tireless duplication and reproduction; a reconstruction according to a fixed typological inventory of humans, animals, plants, and so on. Typological experiments, genetic idiosyncrasies, and crossbreeds cannot reproduce. The principle of life means growth until maturity, reproduction according to type and species stability. Classicism assumes the same to be true for artistic creation. Innovation in form will occur only with the introduction of a new functional type. This being an extremely rare occurrence, it cannot be of any relevance for day-to-day artistic practice. To elevate it to a principle of life as modernism has done can only lead to delusions and categorical confusion.




THE SILLY "FLAT ROOF" FICTION
Practically speaking the flat roof is an impossibility
ITS FLAT!
ITS MODERN!
Logically speaking the flat roof is a paradox
a flat roof is no flatter than the earth is flat.....
the "flat roof" is a contradiction in terms
WATER HAS TO FLOW OFF SOMEWHERE,
to the OUTSIDE or the INSIDE.
LK05
The flat roof is no more 'modern' than the inclined roof is 'ancient'
The terraced or the pitched roofs are
TECHNOLOGICAL not EMOTIONAL or PHILOSOPHIC issues



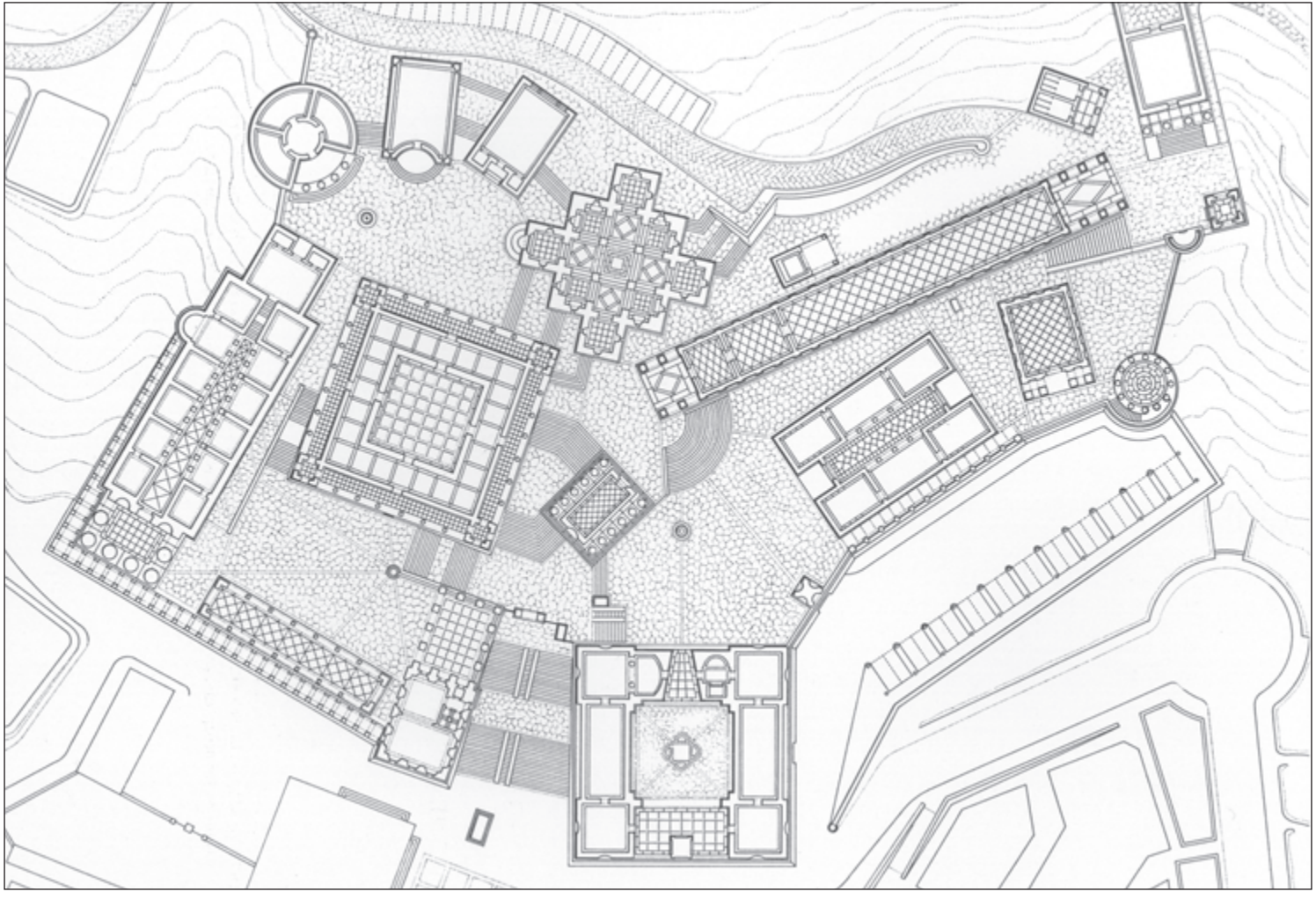




ALL EXPERIENCE IS A MATTER OF THE PAST. INTELLIGENT ACTION REQUIRES A RETURN TO PAST EXPERIENCE. WISDOM AND INTELLIGENCE ARE PRODUCTS OF THE ACCUMULATION OF EXPERIENCE, WHETHER INDIVIDUAL OR COLLECTIVE. TO LOOK BACK IS NOT NECESSARILY A BACKWARD STEP. TRADITION MEANS THE TRANSMISSION OF EXPERIENCE AND INFORMATION. NO ONE IS ACCUSED OF BEING BEHIND THE TIMES BECAUSE HE WRITES OR SPEAKS! ALL INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS ARE TRADITIONAL AND CONVENTIONAL. IN ARCHITECTURE, TOO, TRADITION AND CONVENTION DO NOT AUTOMATICALLY GIVE RISE TO BACKWARDNESS OR A LACK OF VISION; ON THE CONTRARY, THEY REPRESENT A FOUNT OF PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS FOR THE RECURRING PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF BUILDING.

CHAPTER VII

THE MODERNITY OF TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE



TRADITIONAL CULTURE AND THE IDEA OF PROGRESS

ARCHITECTURE AND POLITICS

WHY ARCHITECTURE MATTERS TO YOU!

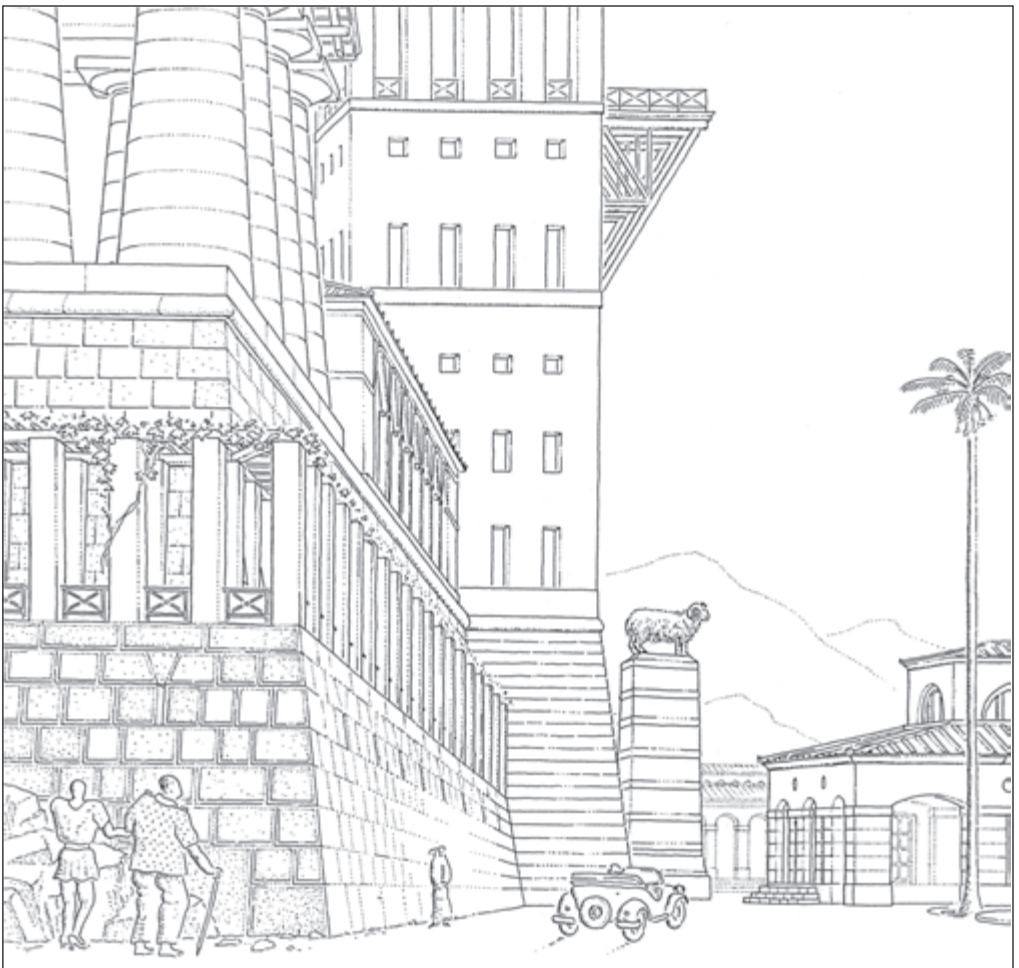
THE DESTINY OF TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE

THE PERENNIAL VALUES OF THE PRINCIPLES OF TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE

THE NEW • THE UNIQUE • THE TECTONIC • THE ORIGINAL

NATURAL AND SYNTHETIC MATERIALS

VENUSTAS • FIRMITAS • UTILITAS



Access to the Agora, ACROPOLIS, ATLANTIS, L.K., 1987.

TRADITIONAL CULTURE AND THE IDEA OF PROGRESS

Our understanding of traditional culture depends largely on our conception of nature and the universe. Whether we believe that evolution and progress have a finality – whether we think that that goal has been reached in the past or whether we believe it will be accomplished in the future – there is little doubt that nature has, with the creation of the human race, reached its highest possible form, its classical form. As far as humanity's biological evolution is concerned, progress seems to be a matter of the past. The typological order represented by man and woman cannot suffer any change as the slightest mutation will mean the instant end of the human race itself. According to our unavoidably anthropocentric conception of time, the typological inventory of nature is complete. Historic time, lacking any evidence of innovation, confirms a tireless duplication and reproduction according to a fixed typological inventory of humans, animals, plants, and so on. Typological experiments, genetic idiosyncrasies, and crossbreeds do not reproduce.

Human observation confirms that the principle of organic life is growth until maturity, reproduction according to type, and species stability. Traditional cultures demonstrate that these same principles hold true for artistic and artisanal creation, and equally in technical and utilitarian creation. Innovation in form occurs with the introduction of a new functional type, but, this being an extremely rare occurrence, it cannot be for day-to-day artistic practice, education, and apprenticeship.

Modernism celebrates innovation as the leading motor of artistic creation. This can only lead to the systematic confusion of categories and minds, to generalized arbitrariness and delusion.

If the *demos* has largely resisted the modernist auto-da-fé and remains attached to models of traditional architecture, it is not due to ignorance or obsolescence. Such sentiments, on the contrary, demonstrate the perennial value and continuing modernity of traditional architecture.

Modernity that augments daily comforts finds broad acceptance. But an aggressive modernism that directs itself against reason, pleasure, and freedom of choice is quite rightly considered a threat for there exists no valid reason why vast modern building programs such as airports, bridges, and motorways should be permanently unpleasant to the eye. When one considers their great cost, why should they not, with majestic lanes, magnificent gardens, immense spans, and glittering halls, become the Versailles of our time?

ARCHITECTURE AND POLITICS

Neither authoritarian nor democratic architecture exists per se; there exist only authoritarian or democratic ways of producing and using architecture. A row of doric columns is by nature no more authoritarian than a tensile structure is democratic. While being the highest and most visible expression of the *polis*, architecture is not political though it can be used politically. But even its political misuse cannot spoil its intrinsic civilizing power. True architecture always transcends the goals of the politics that it temporarily serves. Buildings can be inhumane not because of their architecture but only because of a lack of architecture. A building becomes inhumane in the absence of architecture or when it is clad in false architecture or kitsch. Kitsch is both false appearance and abstraction. There is no reactionary or revolutionary architecture, there is only architecture or its absence, its abstraction.

Can there be a direct relation between the common perception of contemporary institutions such as NATO, the United Nations and the European Union, and the crass utilitarian style of their buildings, which seem so deliberately lacking in symbolic expression? All great human institutions are to this day symbolized by classical monuments: St. Peter's in Rome, the Capitol in Washington, Westminster in London. All these institutions and buildings have been linked by an indissoluble bond for as long as people can remember. The dignity and self-respect of such bodies are made visible in the majesty of their architecture.

It is by no means insignificant that there have been no public protests against traditional architecture; people, rather, protest its absence. Even though the fundamental differences between traditional and historicist architecture cannot be emphasized enough, architectural historicism and the nostalgic return to stylistic figures and formulas of the past are in no way morally condemnable in principle. Pastiches of any style, even those of modernism, ought to be judged purely on their beauty, quality, and competence. In any case, the lapses and petty mistakes of traditional architecture are for the majority of people much more bearable than abstraction and brutalism. The baroque excesses of traditional architecture in the past have survived the demise of totalitarian regimes much better than more recent modernist deserts.

Opposite and following spread: ACROPOLIS, ATLANTIS, L.K., 1987.

WHY ARCHITECTURE MATTERS TO YOU!

Many artists while demanding their works be publicly funded have but scarce regard for the public's taste and reactions. And yet, appreciating and judging architecture is everyone's affair. Just as food concerns us personally in a daily manner, we live with buildings whether we like it or not. That is why we all have strong feelings about the subject; knowingly or unconsciously we constantly and radically judge architecture simply by liking or disliking a place, a house, a city; by being attracted to certain buildings and repelled by others. So it is with films, food, novels, and people; critics' opinions don't influence our spontaneous feelings and capacity to judge, they may, however, influence our revealing or hiding those feelings, our pride or shame in them.

Have you not noticed yourself or others apologizing for liking or disliking famous places such as Yale's Mellon Center and Williamsburg, and then adding, ". . . but then, I am no expert." If you don't like a dish or a car design you don't feel guilty for disagreeing with the experts' choices. Why should architecture be any different? Sir Terence Conran and other prominent modernists maniacally blame house buyers because according to market statistics they massively prefer living in traditional homes. Even though he himself lives in well publicized traditional homes in England and France he scolds house builders for selling traditional designs. Maybe we should ask ourselves not what is wrong with ourselves, but rather what is wrong with our critics. How do we react when a prominent British architect condemns in the mass media the architecture of Sir Christopher Wren, while applauding the achievements of Sir Denys Lasdun, architect of the graceless London National Theater? The normally constituted individual thinks, "There must be profound reasons for saying such a thing even if I don't get it," and indeed many modernist artists and critics in all modesty claim to be so far ahead in their thinking that it will take the non-expert decades of effort and patience before gaining access to the arcane.

Once art and criticism move away from the rational, the aesthetical, the logical, i.e., the self-evident and verifiable proposition onto a plane of the hermetic and unprovable, then anything, any statement, becomes "authoritative" as long as it is repeated in speech and print.

Contrary to the "culturally correct wisdom" civilized people don't have to be specially educated to like good architecture; they have however to be brainwashed in order to grow a liking to architectural products they would otherwise despise. Historical cities and buildings, and traditional aesthetics are endearing to people generally, not because of "history" – "culture" – "memory" but

HYPOSTYLE HALL FOR MASSIMO SCOLARI, L.K., 1977.

simply for their self-evidently superior quality, their beauty, efficiency, and practicality. Civilized human intelligence is generally seduced and convinced by objects that are at once useful and aesthetic, by the harmony of shapes, common construction methods, and compositions without any explanation and justification.

That is why so many people love Williamsburg and Poundbury despite the ritualistic condemnation by the cultural high-priests.

They don't flock spontaneously to Kahn's Richards Laboratories or to Greenbelt, Maryland, however numerous their awards.

We read a lot about "sick building syndrome" affecting our physical health; but what about those who damage our mental well-being. Yes it is the latter with which we ought to be most urgently concerned. We quite simply suffer of having to look at many more unpleasant buildings, than we have generally to use or come in direct contact with. Between feeling mildly uncomfortable everyday having to drive past a charmless office block on one hand, and going into severe depression for having to spend long hours in oppressively ugly buildings on the other, there exist fine gradations of architectural displeasures, affecting our spiritual sanity in various ways. It is true that no period in history has developed such a rich variety of generalized architectural depravity.

Never have so few been responsible for such willful degradation of the human-made environment ranging from the totalitarian uniformity of modular housing developments to the bombastic aggressiveness of public works. Today "an unspoiled landscape is not a landscape without buildings but one without modernist buildings alone" says Quinlan Terry. Strong and insensitive minds may resist longer, but in the end everybody's spirits are fatally drawn downward by the corrosive effects of architectural banalism.

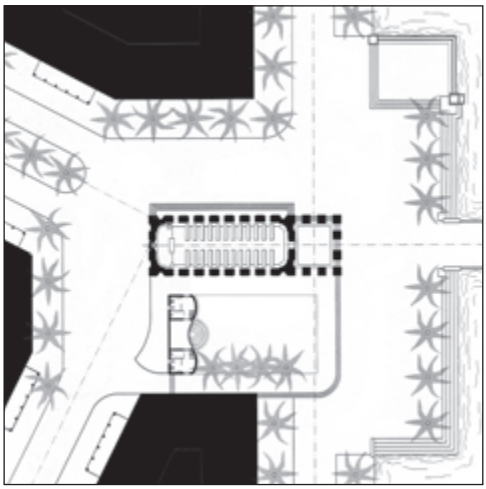
In the same way that people, objects, or landscape can by their sheer presence, fill your heart with joy or rob it of all energy, so can buildings make or break your day. For buildings are never neutral, however neutral or insipid they may look. They act positively or negatively upon you; they enrich or impoverish your life in a radical way. Growing up in a prefabricated housing development, being educated in modular school buildings, or simply using everyday urban freeways or transit systems makes you become aesthetically anesthetized. As a constant pain dulls your awareness, so does overexposure to ugliness desensitize your mind. But excessive hunger will in the end kill the body, and we have to ask ourselves what beauty-depletion kills in us? Beautiful cities and landscapes, charming villages, and not least the beauty of modern machines and vehicles are proof that humanity's aesthetic sense is as natural and universal a gift as the capacities of speech, motion, and reproduction. Ugliness is an extremely rare occurrence in nature; systematic environmental and architectural ugliness are a human affair. They are not the result of a lack of culture, but on the contrary, of a conceptual confusion, of the determined and stubborn pursuit of wrong ideas, of a mistaken and decadent cultural ideology.

Miserably looking buildings and places are never the outcome of necessity but of style and culture. There is an elegant and aesthetic solution for every kind of budget.

Living in a traditional house and driving a fast car are not incompatible. They are not against the spirit of our time, as cultural correctness would have us believe, but an integral expression of it. The near universal condemnation of Prince Charles' Poundbury project by the culture gurus has no influence at all on the rising sales of its traditionally built homes, factories, or commercial buildings.

The fact that modernism has never been a popular choice is not due to people's ignorance but to modernism's own reduction of choices and expressions.

Beware of how much you have to look away from walking through town and country . . . that is why architecture matters to you!



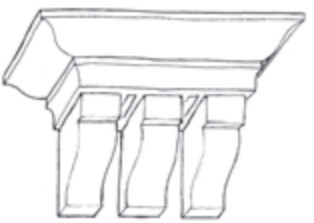
MEETING HALL AT WINDSOR, FLORIDA, L.K. WITH SCOTT MERRILL, 1989–1999.

THE DESTINY OF TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE

Traditional architecture is not something that can be acquired once and for all. It is transmitted from individual to individual, and its quality varies greatly with each generation. It can disintegrate suddenly after attaining great heights or it can flourish extraordinarily in a few short years after a period of general decadence. Like all living organisms, it finds itself in a permanent process of reconstruction.

Its present penury is not fatal and does not justify universal rejection. Its very decadence creates the conditions necessary to clarify its causes and to prepare for an improvement. Architecture finds its highest expression in the classical orders: a legion of geniuses could not improve them any more than they could improve the human body or its skeleton. Karl-Friedrich Schinkel stated that progress in architecture had been so great in the past that only the most trained eye could detect any improvement in the classical orders.

This is evident in all cultural arenas: a classical language is not abandoned when it is badly spoken; on the contrary, one establishes in such periods the instruments necessary to restore its classical form. The argument that as a result of some cataclysmic event the language of traditional architecture is exhausted and definitively obsolete was based not upon a critique of its internal structures but upon a rejection of its abuses by politics. And yet true traditional architecture still speaks to us. Far from being foreign to us it serves us well. It conveys its essential messages to us even if we are not capable of sending any ourselves.



Traditional architecture remains a living language, although many architects have lost the will to learn its grammar and use its vocabulary. Past and present crises have neither eroded nor polluted the traditional language: its rules, meanings, inventories, and vocabularies are merely temporarily veiled in confusion or simple ignorance. The transfer of its knowledge and its know-how has suffered a brutal interruption. A new apprenticeship and a reconstruction of its disciplines is possible and already well under way. The transmission of values occurs neither mechanically nor involuntarily but through determination and reason: it is a cultural choice.

WINDSOR CAMPANILE AND MARKET HALL

THE PERENNIAL VALUES OF THE PRINCIPLES OF TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE

The resurgence of traditional architecture makes sense only in a broad context of planning and modernizing cities, villages, and countryside. This objective is not contrary to the wishes of the majority and of the democratic electorate. Traditional architecture has continued to serve in all ages and under different political regimes; there is no reason why this should not be the case in the future. Towns and buildings in this style can be adapted with imagination and elegance to the changing needs of advanced and democratic industrial societies – as was the case with nineteenth century railway stations. Even the functions of air terminals or airplane hangers are not in contradiction with the typologies and building techniques of traditional architecture. We are not asking the air terminal to fly, and a modern hangar can be seen as a large portico. The construction technique of a garage need have nothing to do with that of the car it shelters.

And so there is no practical or philosophical reason for imposing modernist solutions when traditional methods have proved their superiority on a financial, technical, typological, and aesthetic basis.

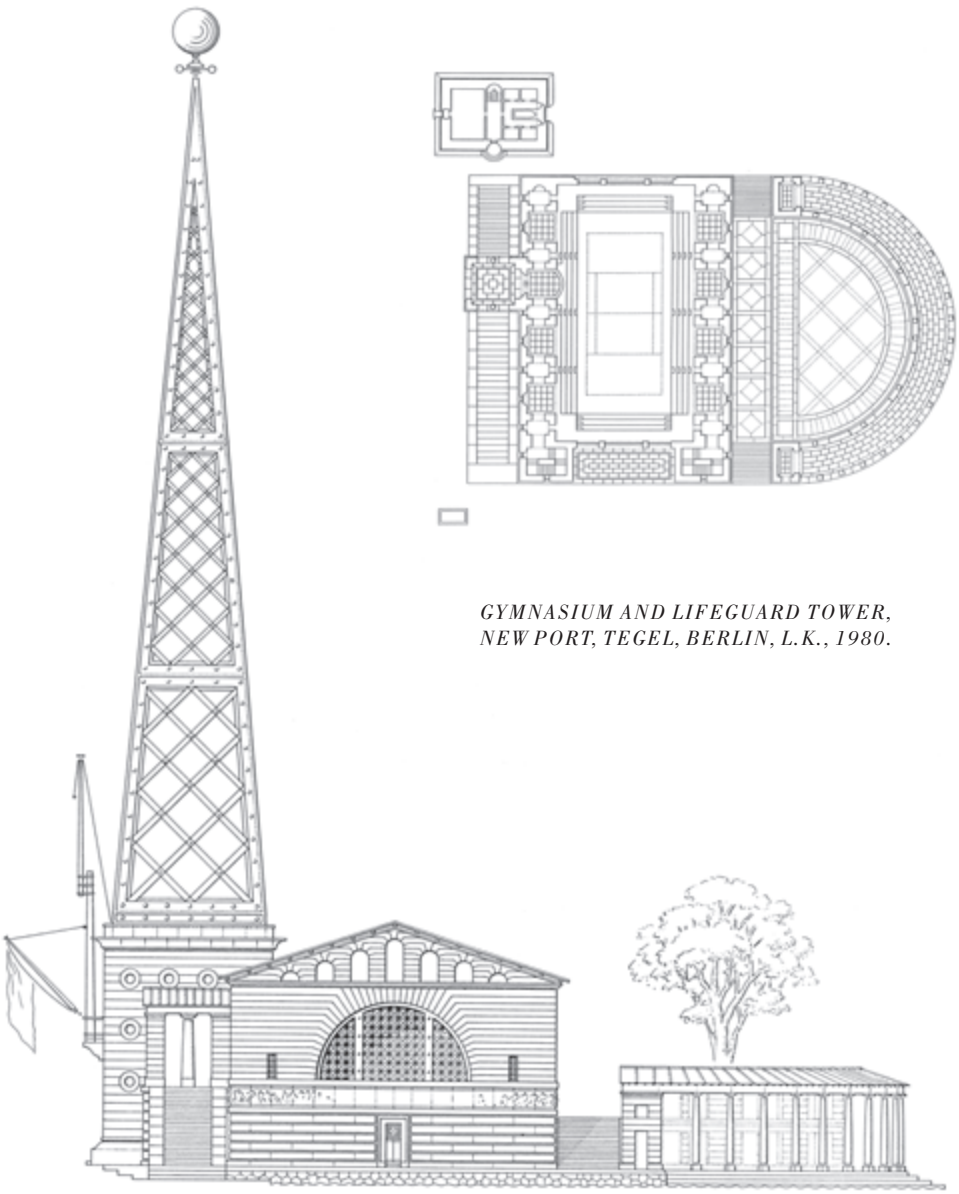
The assertion that the principles of traditional architecture have been made obsolete by industrial technology is erroneous. The city of the industrial age need not look industrial, and neither can it be an industrial product.

In architecture, as in other ancient disciplines such as mathematics, gastronomy, and philosophy, technical, formal, and typological innovation cannot be a goal in itself. Traditional architecture is not a closed system, it is extended by improvements having made their proof, because for the same reason as passengers are not flown on experimental airplanes, citizens should not be housed in experimental buildings and cities. Such experiments result generally in cultural disaster and political crime.

The reduction or extension of the typological or morphological inventory of architecture is not achieved by fancy but by changes in use, custom, materials, and techniques. The creativity, individual quality, and originality of traditional forms of settlement and buildings lie in the adaptation of a panoply of forms and plans to different local conditions. Traditional architecture is an invention of the mind, a product of rational thought and aesthetic judgment. It has greater universality than language for its elements are comprehensible to people everywhere without translation. Independent of country and age, it includes all buildings conceived by artisan and artistic cultures. Such cultures are based on individual, autonomous trades, as opposed to industrial organization and mass-production.

Traditional architecture produces objects of long-term use that differ from modernism's objects of immediate consumption. It is for this reason that traditional architecture's principles, its forms and techniques resist fashion for, to paraphrase Hannah Arendt, no public space or collective culture is possible without the potential immortality of our buildings and cities.

Without such material and moral immortality, architecture could not aspire to be a civic art.



GYMNASIUM AND LIFEGUARD TOWER, NEW PORT, TEGEL, BERLIN, L.K., 1980.

THE NEW • THE UNIQUE • THE TECTONIC • THE ORIGINAL

However "old" the human race may be it is capable of producing a miraculous variety of new and unique individuals. The generating principles of traditional architecture seem to have the same inexhaustible capacity for creating new and unique buildings and towns. The classical notions of stability and timelessness are clearly linked to the lifespan of humanity – they are not transcendental and abstract absolutes. In this context the age of a principle is irrelevant.

These principles are not rooted in a historical past, but their origin is forever present. The term "architecture" literally means the beginning (arkhè) of carpentry (tektôn), meaning the origin of construction itself; that is, the form of origin, the original and archetypal form free from all aspects of style and superfluity. This name also resounds with the immemorial antiquity (arkhaios) of classical and traditional principles and their timeless values.

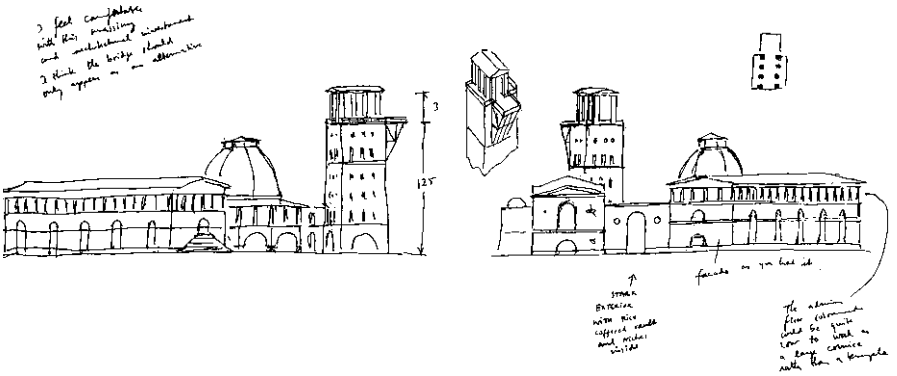
Contrary to modernist assertions, traditional architecture does not embody a historic/archaic (i.e., past) knowledge but technical know-how essentially related to the human condition. The principles of this technology are universal in a strictly anthropological sense and are, therefore, not to be confounded with "traditionalist" habits and simulacra. Nor should they be confused with the desperate clinging to obsolescent and anachronistic methods and forms. The universal principles of traditional architecture – harmony, stability, utility – are concordant with the fundamental goals of all significant human establishments; in every great culture they have been the chosen means to the end of a wise and civilized polity. In the whirlwind of all things human they are guarantors of social bonds, stability, and peace, the recognizable manifestations of a common moral world.

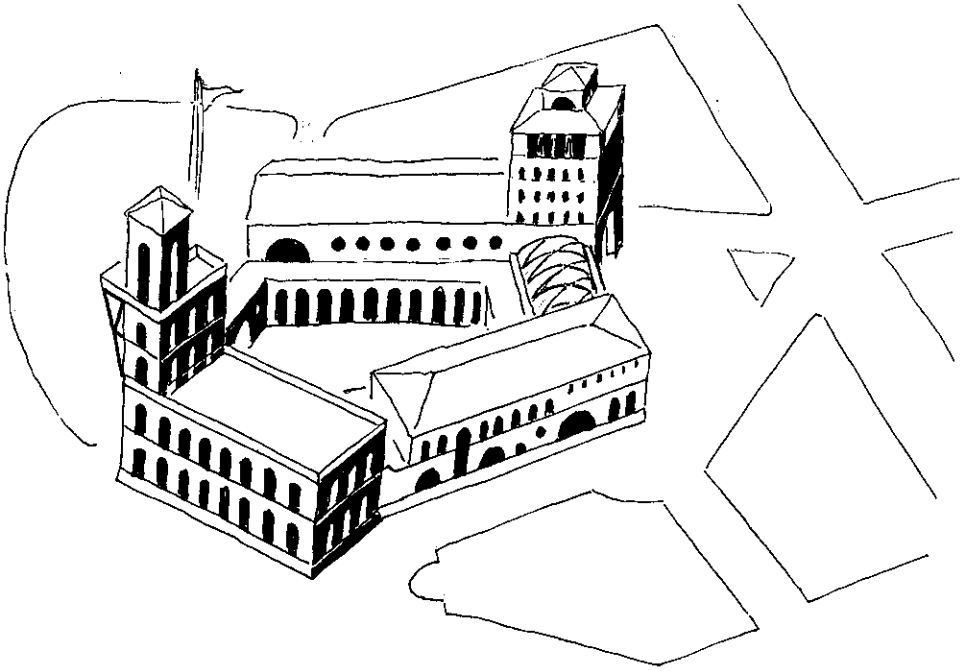
Traditional architecture is practiced by the conscious imitation of a limited number of constructive and functional types that shelter and symbolize fundamental human activities, notably those of the individual or collective life. These typologies become associated with particular functions, customs, and rites.

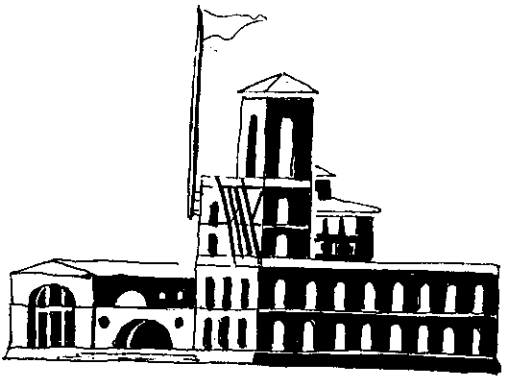
The internal and external volumes and spaces assembled in a symmetrical or asymmetrical way are composed according to an organic logic. This ensures a rational cohesion between plans, sections, and elevations of a building or group of buildings.

Because of their difference in status and size, vernacular and classical structures differ in their compositional means, in the relative dimensions of whole and parts, in materials and character, and, above all, in the degree of artistic or artisan elaboration and complexity. For example, a cottage blown up to the

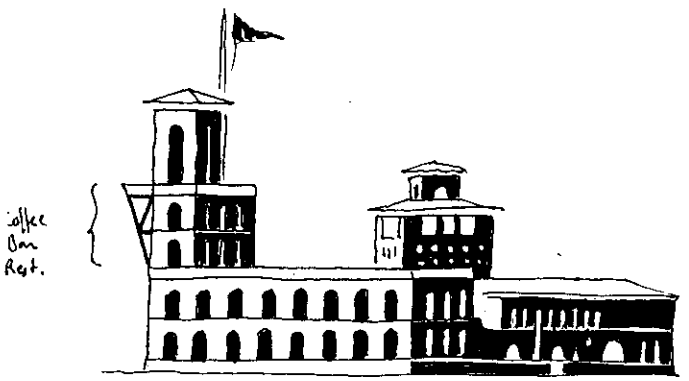
WEST PALM BEACH LIBRARY COMPETITION, WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA, L.K. AND RAFAEL PORTUONDO AND RAUL RODRIGUEZ, 2001.







Palm Beach Library



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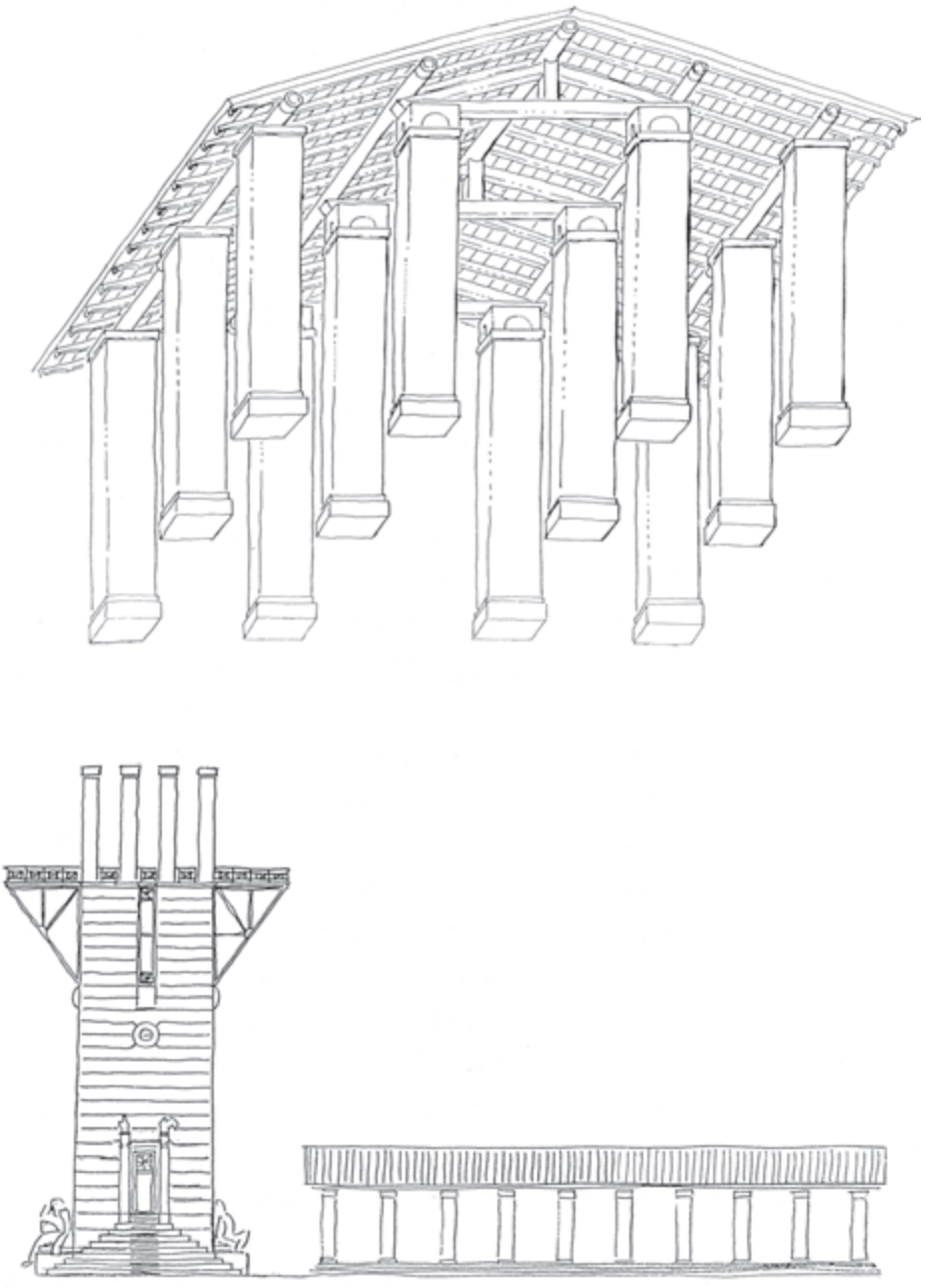


MARKET HALL AND BELVEDERE, MAIN SQUARE, SEASIDE, FLORIDA, L.K., 1985.

dimensions of a palace will look crude in composition and coarse in detail; on the other hand, the decorative refinement of a monumental building will look ridiculous if reduced to the size of a house.

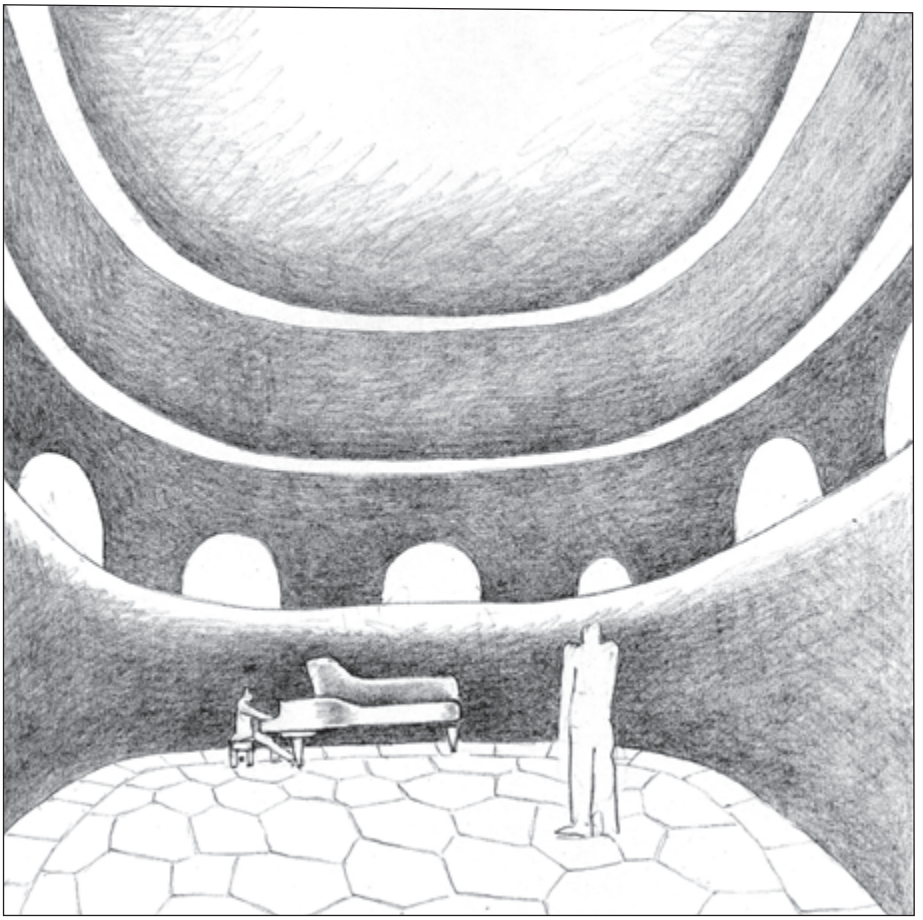
Details of a monumental architecture have to be clearly legible from a distance without losing their refinement when seen up close. A synthesis of grandeur and elegance, its decorative and ordering systems are an articulate expression of constructive logic raised to the level of high art. Monumental architecture translates the elements of vernacular construction into an artistic, symbolic, and monumental language by its use of analogies and emblems.

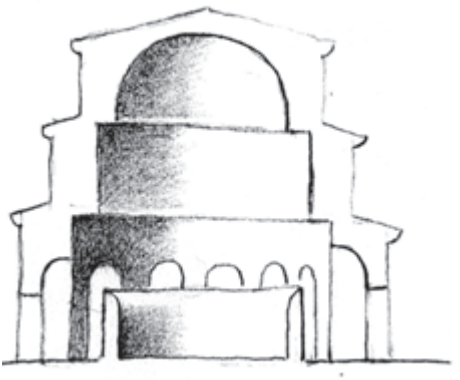
Architecture is not sculpture: their respective content and myths are of a complementary nature. A sculptural and pictorial iconography may enrich tectonic and typological articulations but cannot replace them.

All traditional composition is typological. All traditional construction is tectonic. Traditional architecture is not mysticism; it is an inventory of practical and aesthetic responses to practical problems.

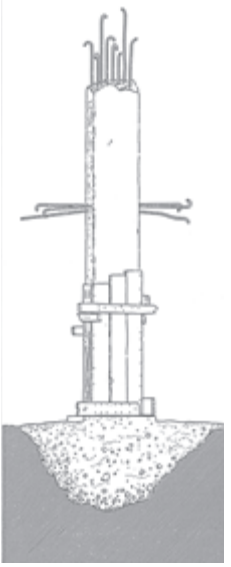
Even though traditional architecture is no longer taught, its trades, disciplines, and techniques have survived multiple industrial revolutions. It is, thus, an integral part of modern architecture. It is not the existence of traditional architecture that is in question today but only the level of its possible quality, for now and the future.

It is on this level that our choices have a determining influence.





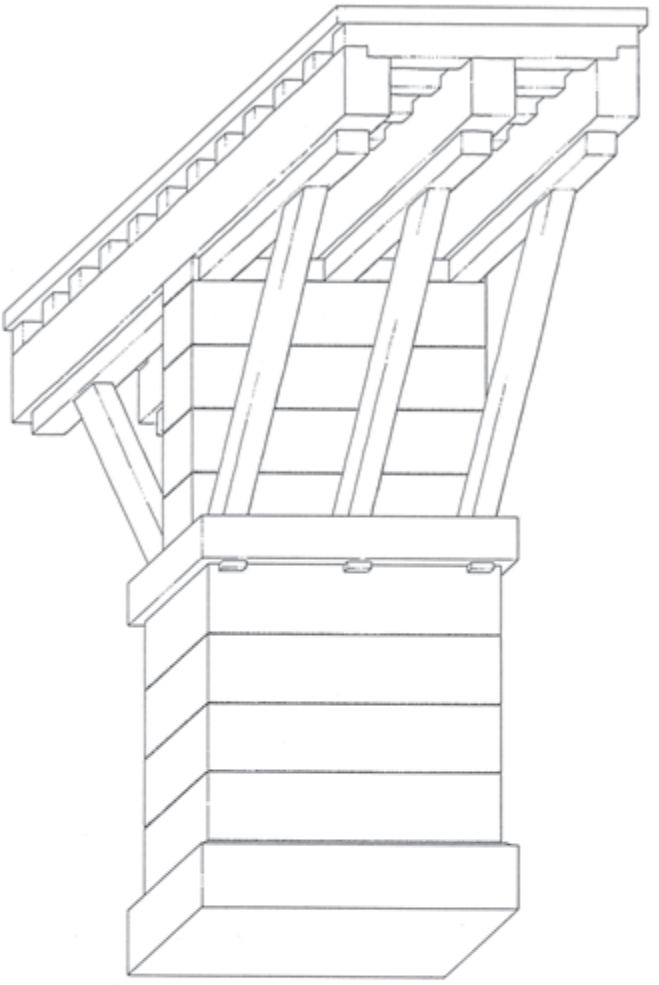
PIANO STUDIO L.K., 2007.

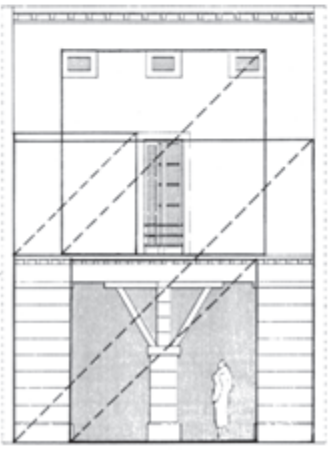


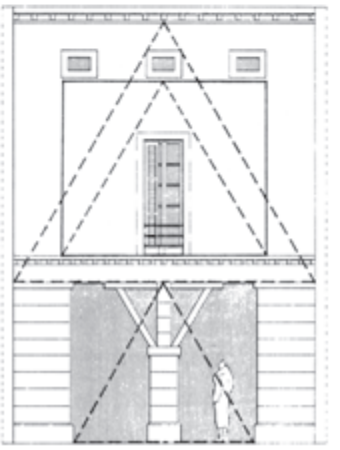
THE SIXTH ORDER
OR THE END OF ARCHITECTURE, L.K., 1977.

NATURAL AND SYNTHETIC MATERIALS

What is the meaning of authenticity within the industrial condition, that of the surrogate, the ersatz, the clone, that of mechanical-serial reproduction, and finally that of synthetic materials? Traditional architectural forms derive from and are conditioned by the use of natural materials. Traditional architecture, vernacular or classical, is strictly material based, "materio-logical." Even an imbecile cannot build a tectonic error when using natural materials; synthetic materials instead make even abstruse, illogical structures stand up. The carpenter working in accordance with the structural logic of wood, creates authentic, unique objects, independent of their era. The architect that imitates wooden beams in stone, but follows the logic of the stone, also creates an authentic, unique object independent of its era. Instead, an architect who copies a classical temple in synthetic materials for commercial use, a mountain lodge for life on the plains, a bunker for living in peace time, aerodynamic wings for use as porticoes, and naval architecture to shelter a school, cannot but produce something inauthentic, a pastiche, a fake. Architects and artisans that respect the spirit and logic of natural materials work within the context of authenticity; those who seek to obey some elusive zeitgeist and the logic of synthetic materials are doomed to produce simulacra: Because in short, kitsch objects and synthetic materials cannot, by their very definition, produce a culture of authenticity. They are furthermore destined to vanish with the exhaustion of fossil and nuclear fuel.

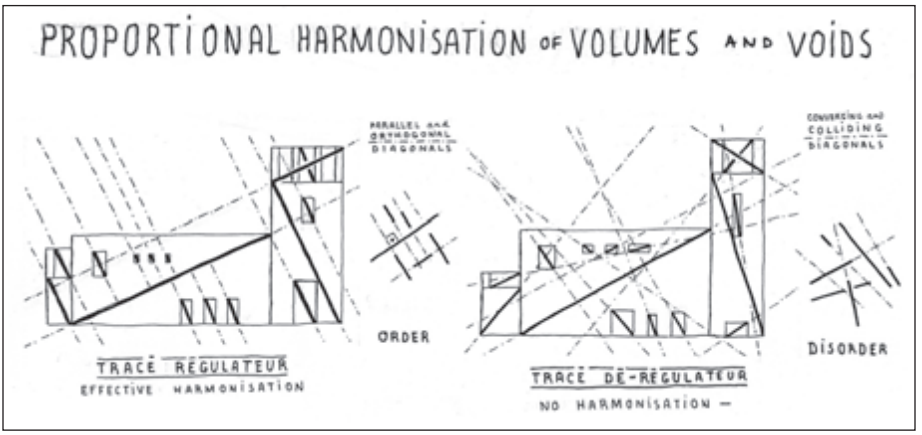






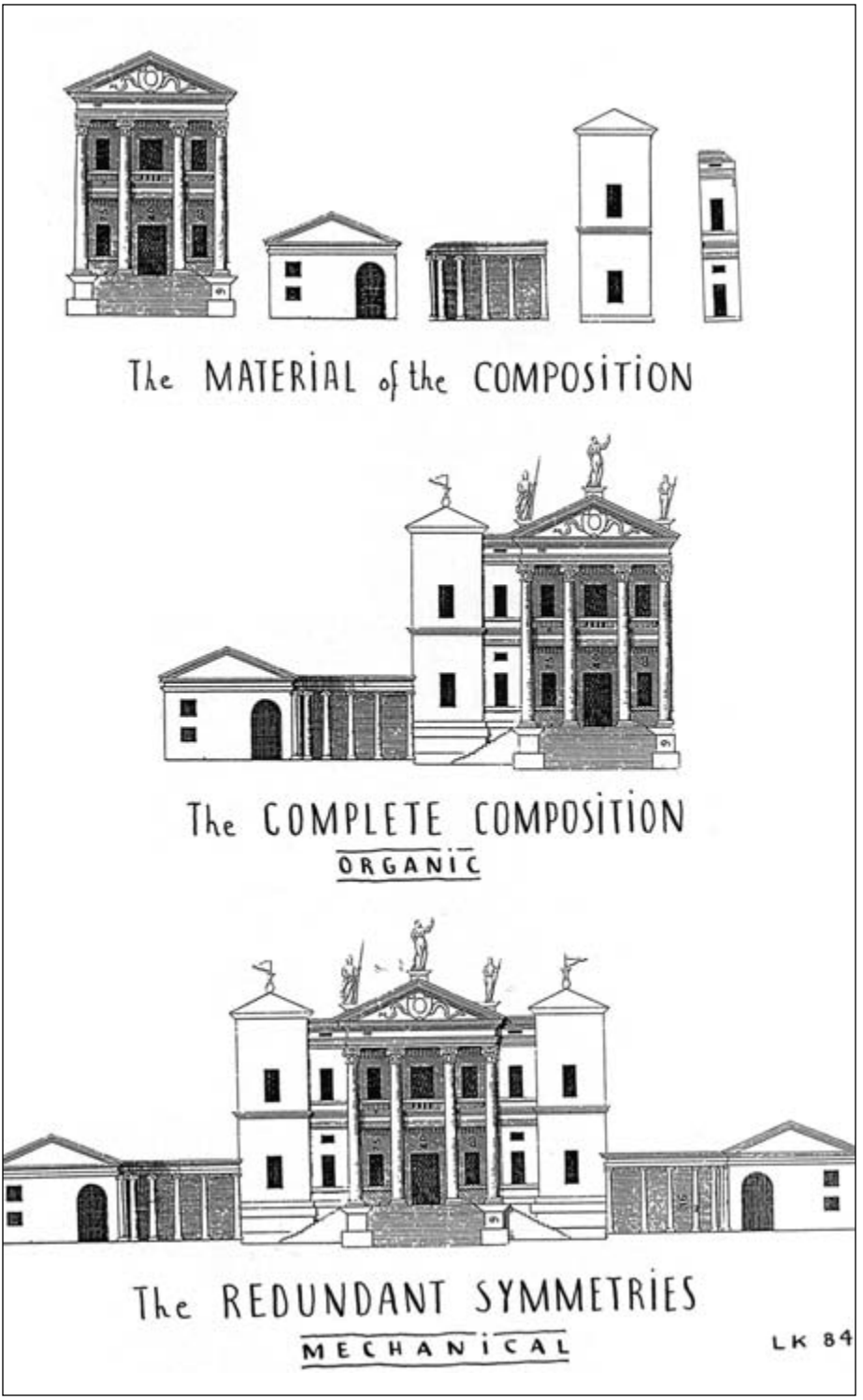
VENUSTAS • FIRMITAS • UTILITAS

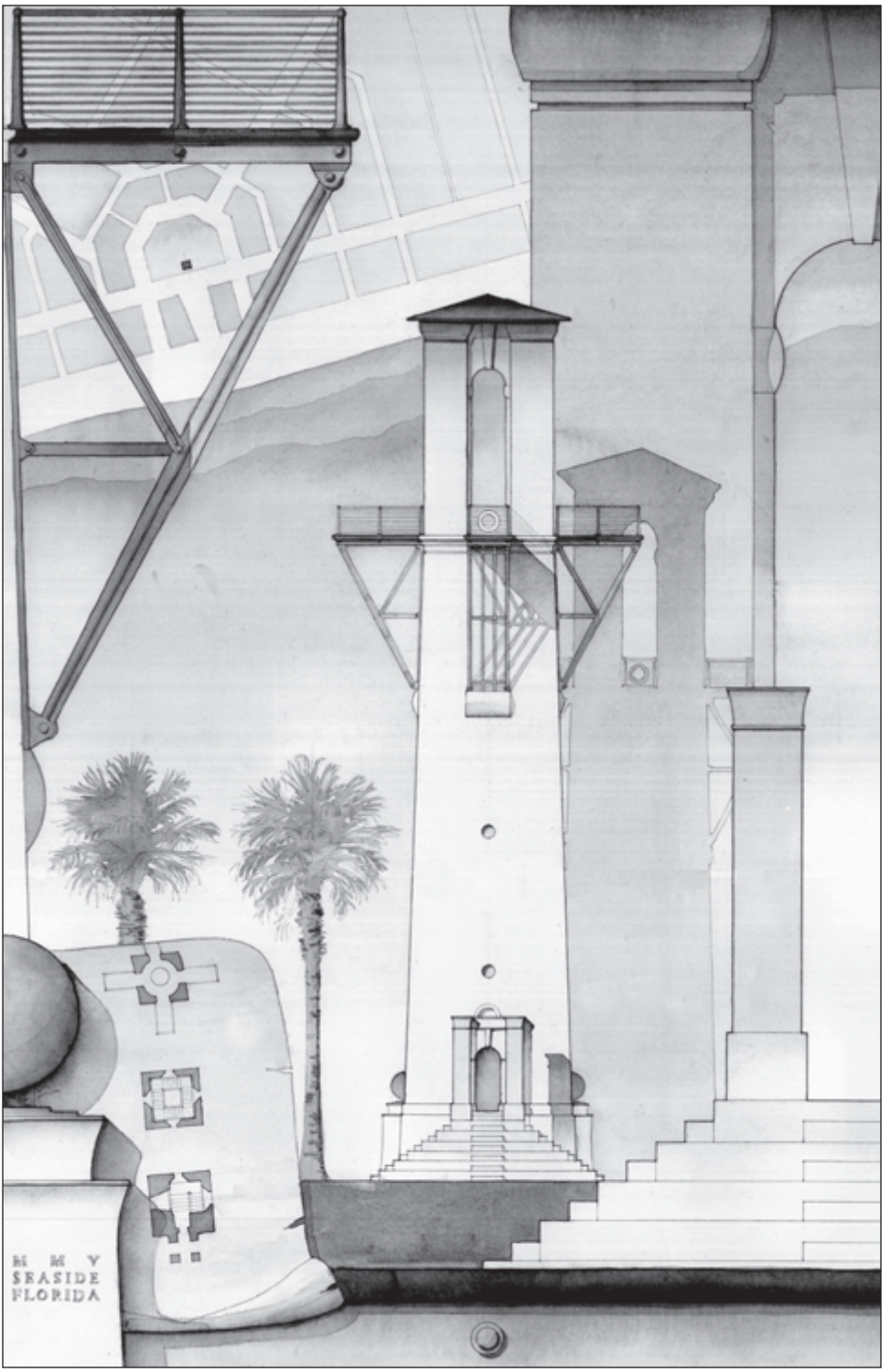
The Vitruvian triad – venustas, firmitas, utilitas – is the founding principle of all traditional architecture. Its significance and meaning can be understood only if considered from a long-term perspective: one cannot satisfy one condition of the triad without respecting the others; one cannot ignore one condition of the triad without invalidating the others. Modernism has vehemently challenged this cohesion, but this has merely confirmed that beauty is not the automatic result of an efficient, functional building. Furthermore, is it not true that even the most robust of buildings has but a short life expectancy if it is lacking in beauty? Likewise, utility and structural stability are absolutely no guarantee of material permanence.



Disagreements about the fundamental issues expressed in the Vitruvian triad are the basis of a schism that has divided architectural understanding for a century. According to modernist tenets, the breakup of this triad is an irreversible and indisputable historical fact. For traditional theory, the passing of time cannot open fatal breaches in a body of timeless principles. The vast typological, technical, and formal repertories of traditional architecture simply cannot be reduced to those of historiographical classifications. Rather, they represent an inventory of genetic capacity. The typologies of traditional architecture form the structuring schemata for innumerable new, original works.

CENTRAL PYLON, FACADE AND PROPORTIONAL SCHEMA FOR THE "CASA VENEZIANA," STRADA NOVISSIMA, VENICE BIENNALE, L.K., 1980. This exhibition stand displayed urban counter-projects elaborated by the Archives d'Architecture Moderne AAM, Brussels, under the guidance of Maurice Culot and Léon Krier, 1977–1980.


The MATERIAL of the COMPOSITION
The COMPLETE COMPOSITION
ORGANIC
The REDUNDANT SYMMETRIES
MECHANICAL
LK 84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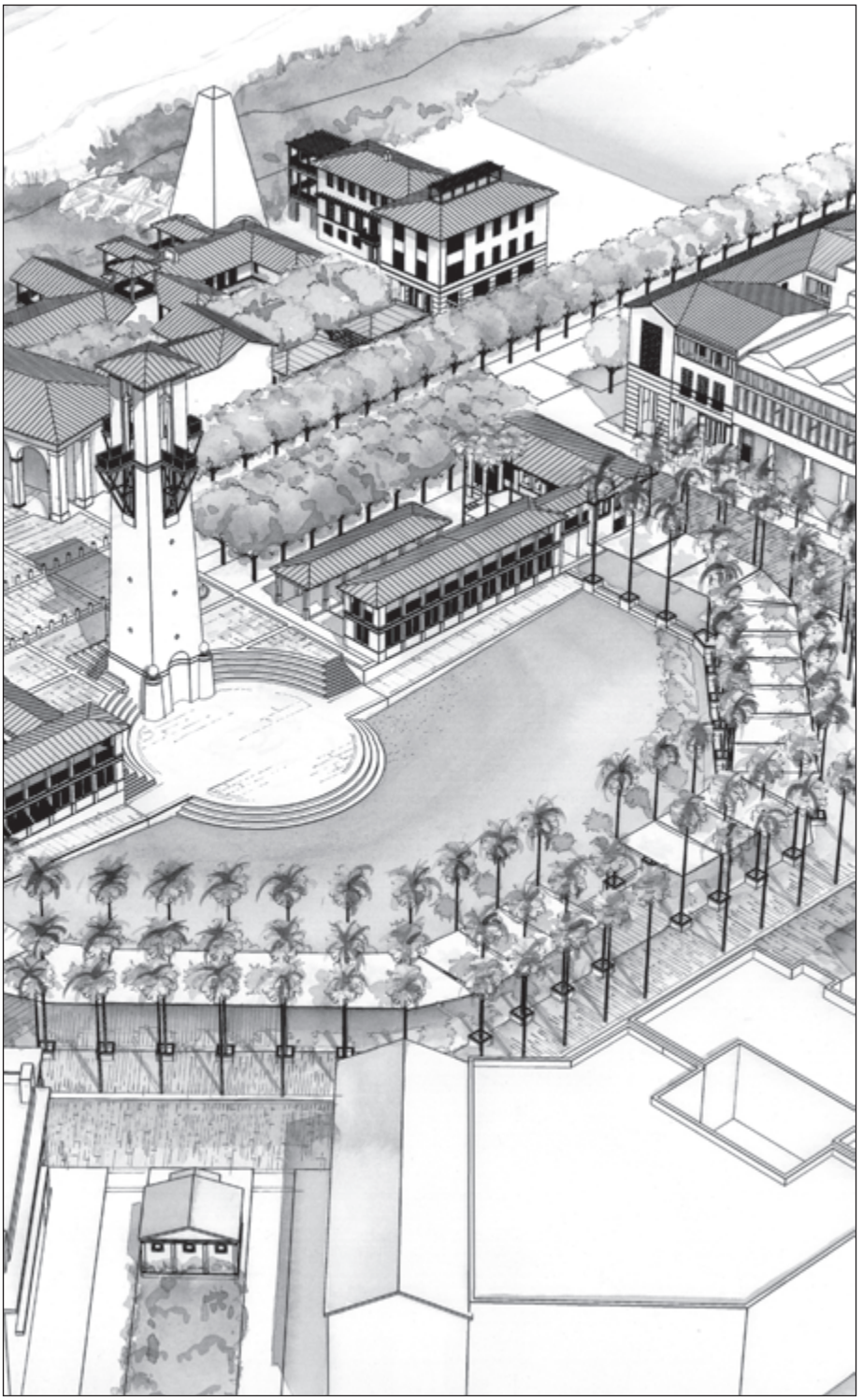
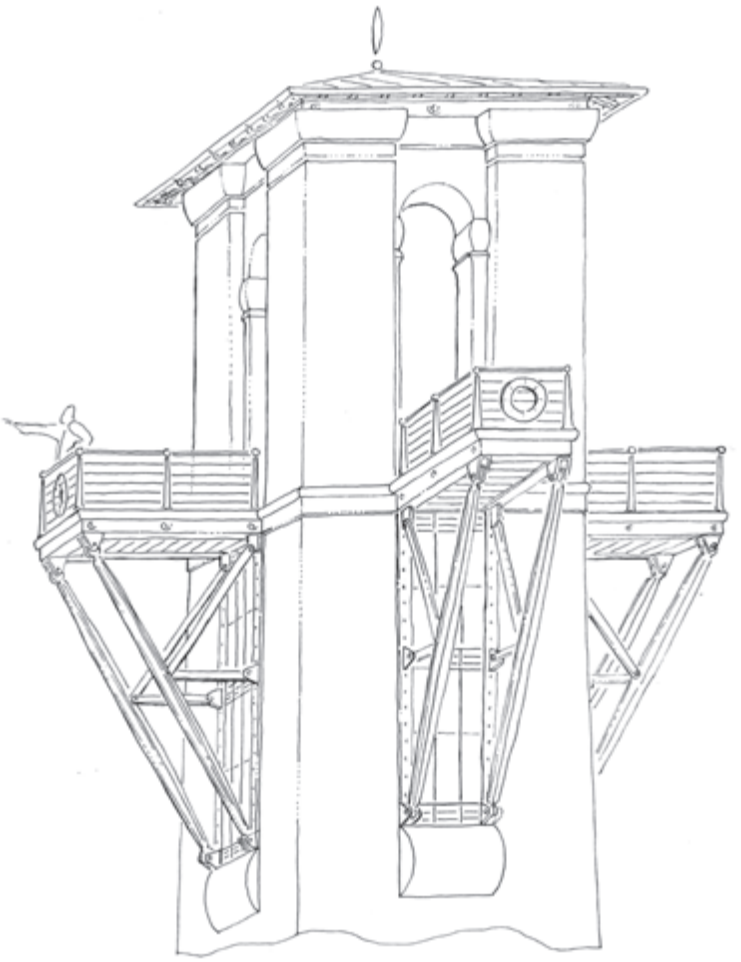
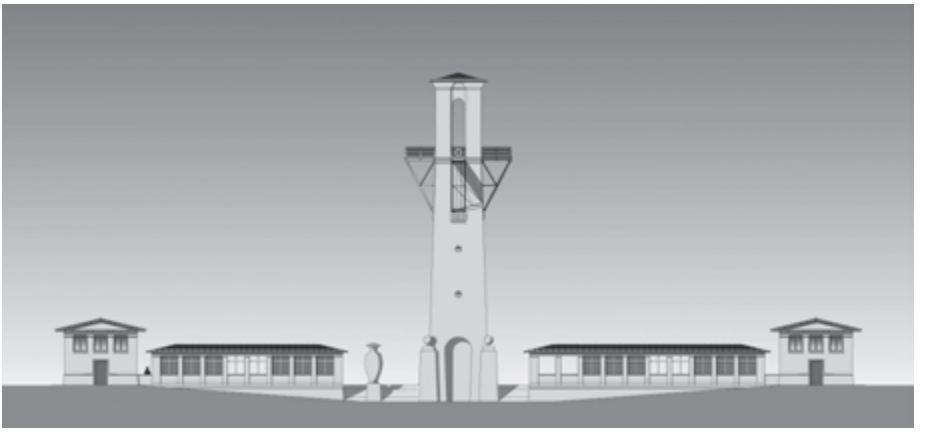
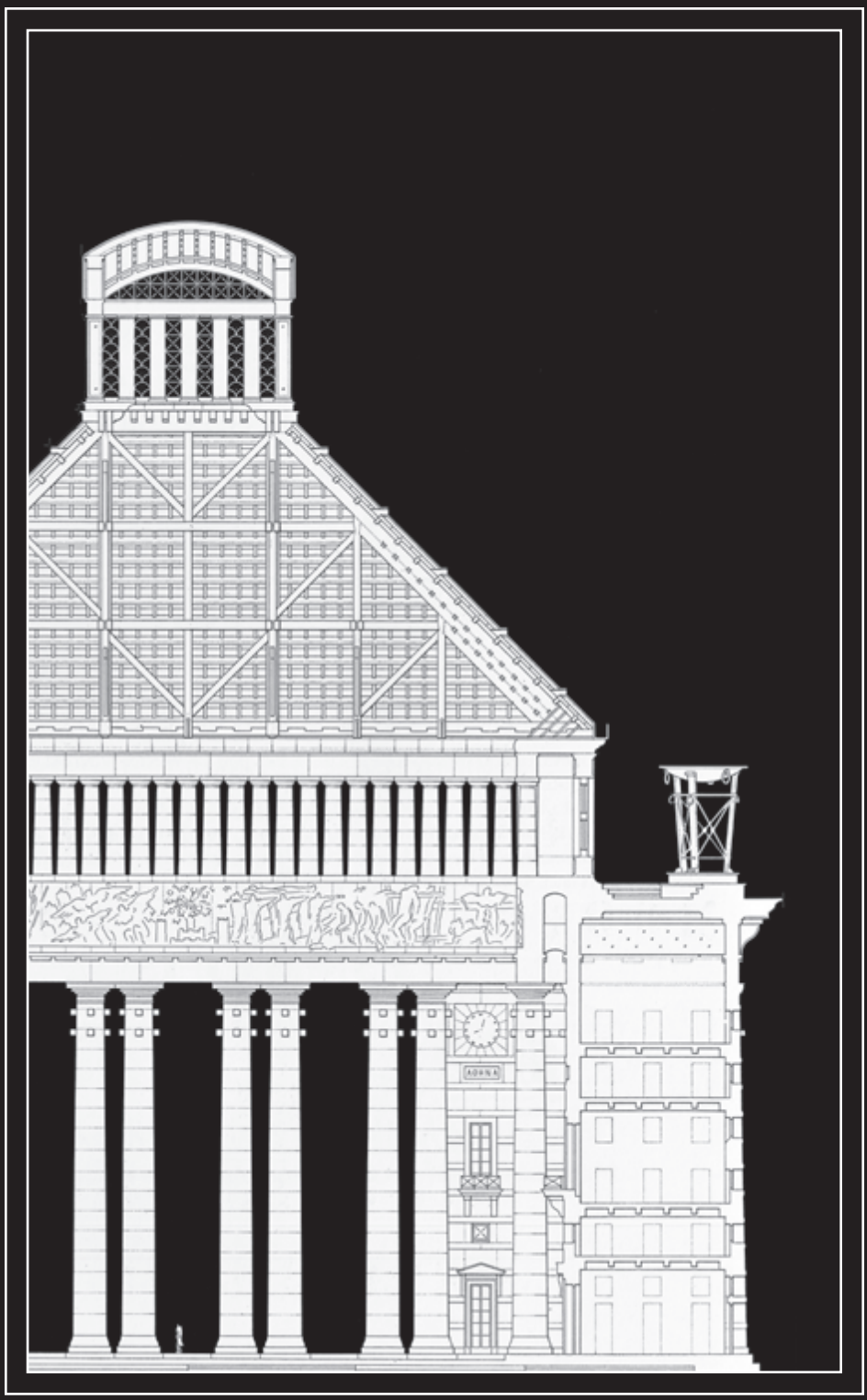




THE SEASIDE TOWER, L.K. WITH OPTICOS DESIGN INC., 2004. The 100 foot tall tower will serve as a visual monument for Seaside located adjacent to the town's amphitheater along Highway 30-A and includes an observation deck. Client: Robert Davis, Seaside Community Development Corporation.





CHAPTER VIII

THE UNIVERSAL USEFULNESS OF A MODERN CRAFT INDUSTRY OR THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Poundbury Development

DORCHESTER

Middle Farm - Market Tower

LÉON KRIER

20·VII·91

CRITIQUE OF THE INDUSTRIALIZATION OF BUILDINGS

THE EVALUATION OF BUILDINGS
BY THEIR WHOLE LIFE CYCLE

KNOWLEDGE OR KNOW-HOW
THE NEED FOR MODERN CRAFTSMANSHIP

HOUSE

HOUSES

LK 82

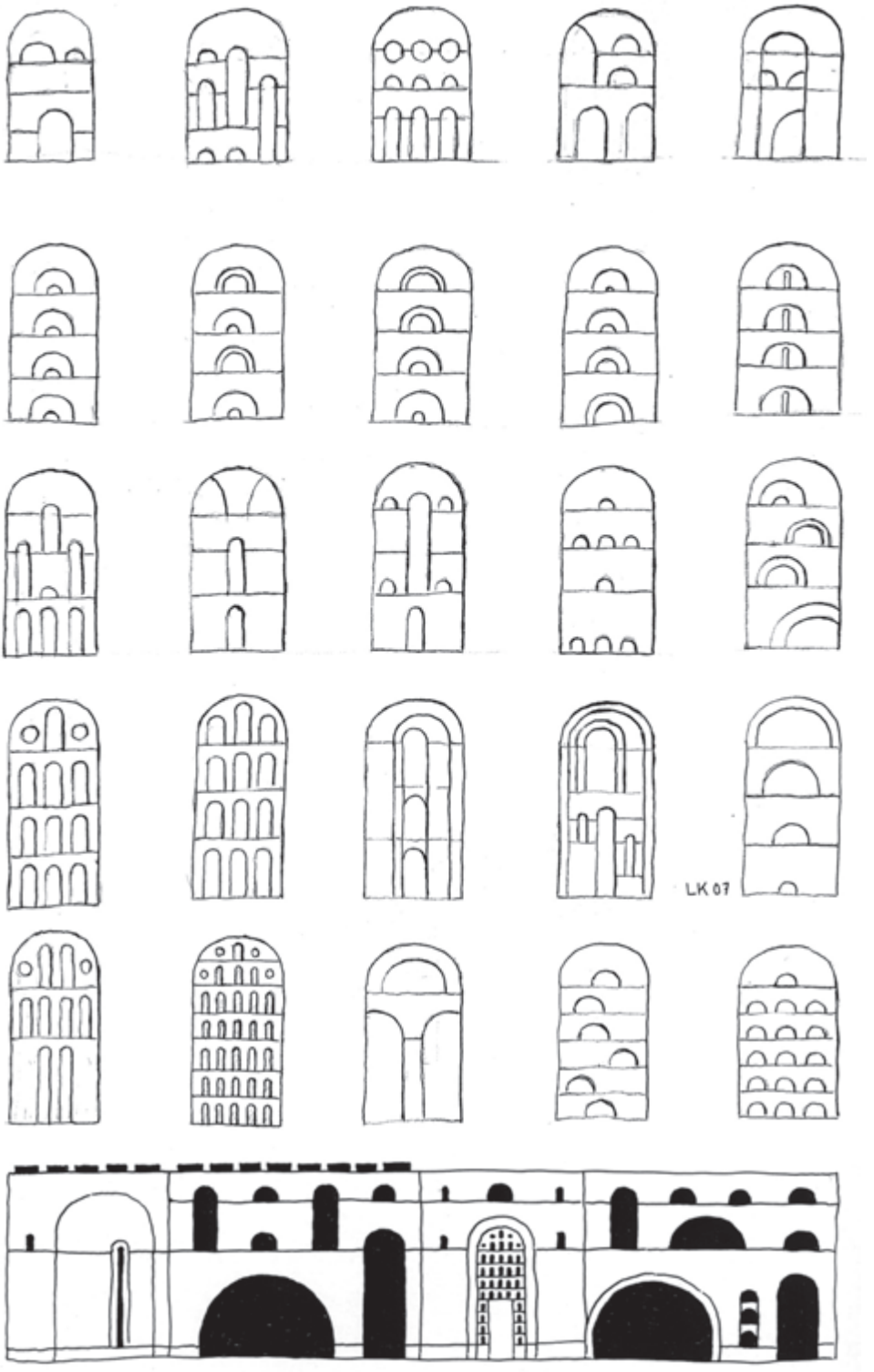
HOUSING

CRITIQUE OF THE INDUSTRIALIZATION OF BUILDINGS

This is an outline critique of the industrialization of building processes, not of building materials, their production and extraction. The industrialization of building has had the negative effect of transforming buildings, which ought to be objects of long-term use, into short-term consumer goods, aggravating the wastage of construction materials beyond what is ecologically tolerable and transforming cities into permanent building sites. Secondly, the enforced promotion of industrialization has marginalized traditional crafts not out of practical necessity but largely out of ideological motives.

The large-scale industrialization of building has failed on numerous counts. It has not brought about any significant technical improvements. It has not reduced building times and costs but has reduced the life span of buildings significantly. It has not increased construction capacities. It has not improved working conditions on building sites nor created more jobs. The industrialization of building has, on the contrary, destroyed the majority of the thirty-nine construction crafts and their immense repertory of technical know-how. It also has been unable to develop acceptable solutions for the typological, morphological, social, and economic complexity of mature urban centers and landscapes. Ironically, whatever their style and whether they are traditional or modernist, buildings of quality are, even today, the products of artisan rather than industrial processes. But craftsmanship and its characteristic manual dexterity have been devastated by industrial relations and the division of labor.

URBANIZATION OF THE BANK OF THE WESER, BREMEN, L.K., 1978–1980.
The masterplan commissioned by the Bremen Senate proposed the division of redundant parking lots and roads into private plots. The revenue gained was to finance the construction of a concert hall and swimming pool and the reconstruction of two historic gates destroyed during the Second World War. The urban blocks were to be developed by private enterprise.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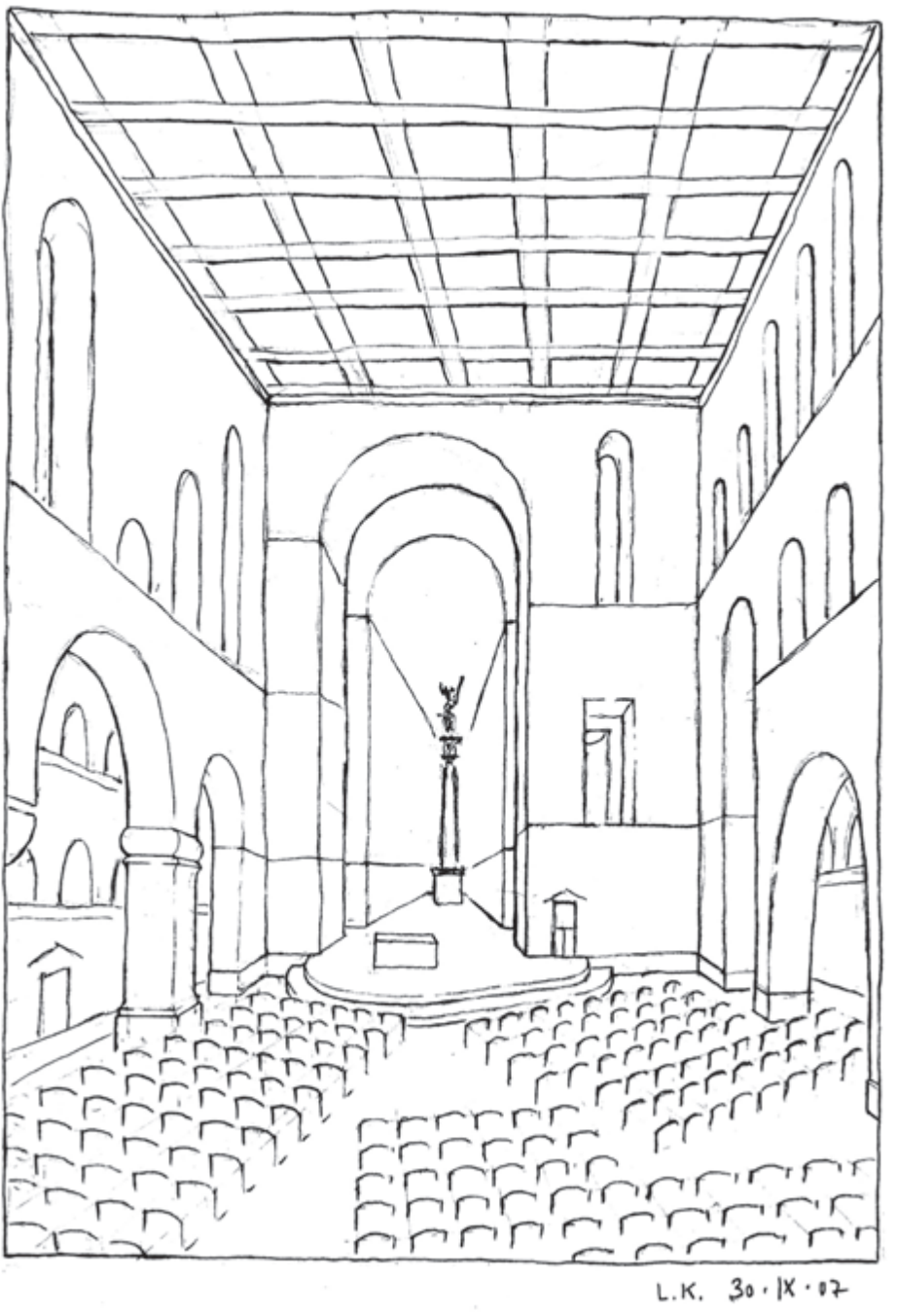
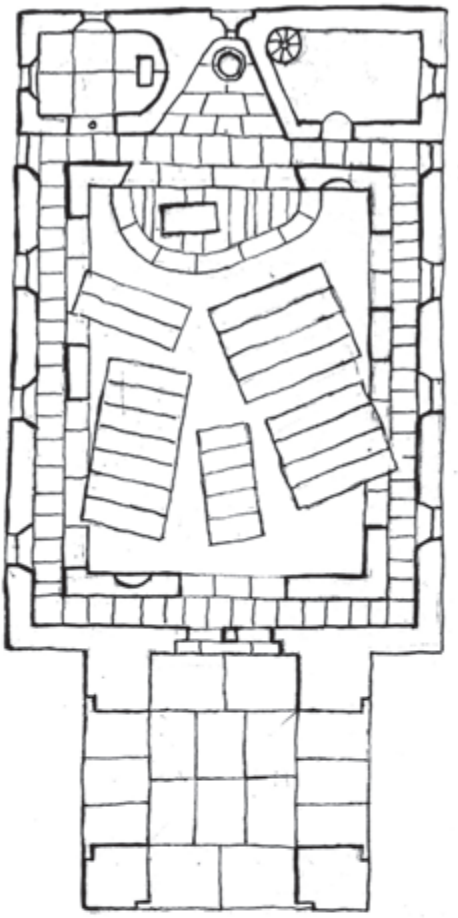
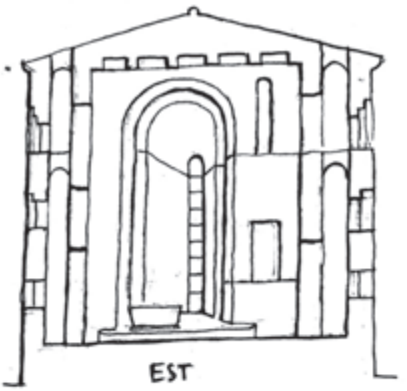


SAN MICHELE FIUMICINO, LK., 2007.
The church and parishioners' house form an urban square on the edge of the new port basin of Fiumicino near Ostia within the masterplan of Bruno Minardi. Other architects include Peter Wilson, Bolles + Wilson, Piercarlo Bontempi, Umberto Carraro, Bruno Mariotti, Angela Albanese, and Caterina Fuchi.



SAN MICHELE
FIUMICINO (LZ)

L.K. ROMA 26·IX·07



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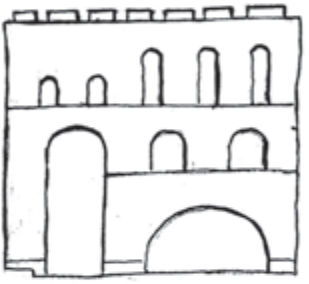

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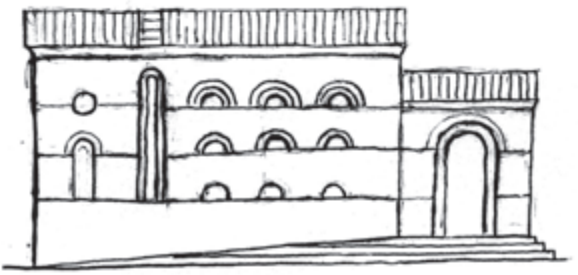

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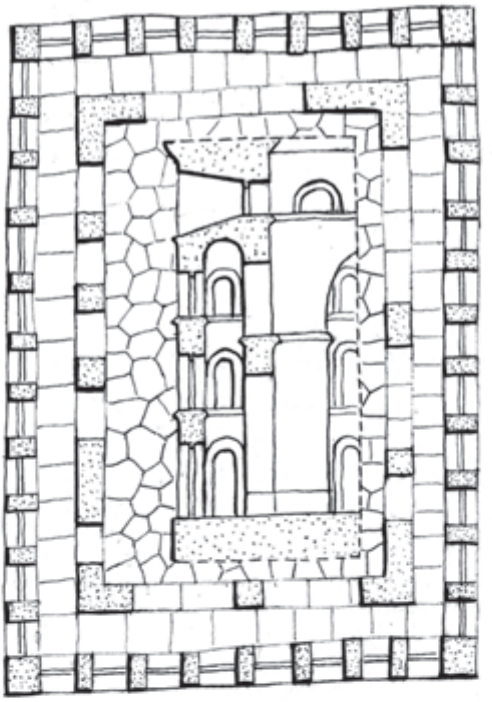

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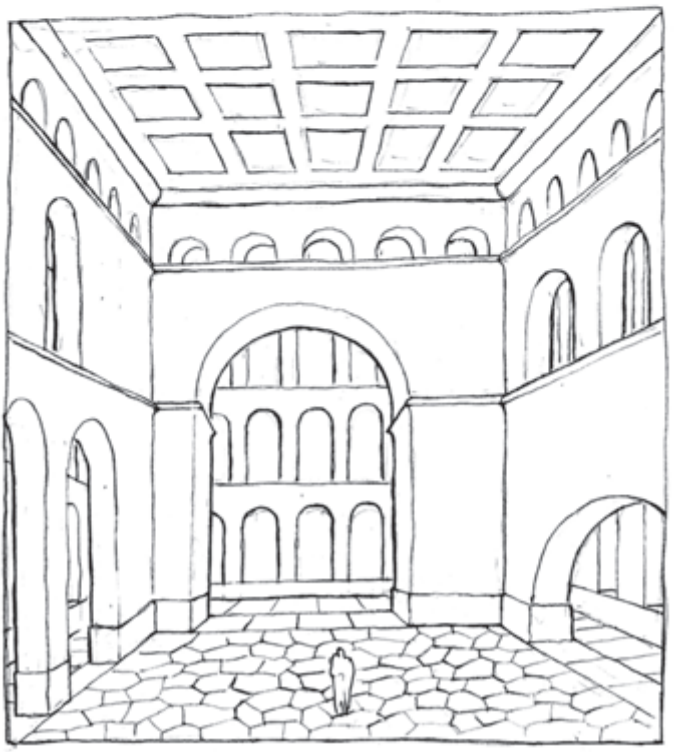

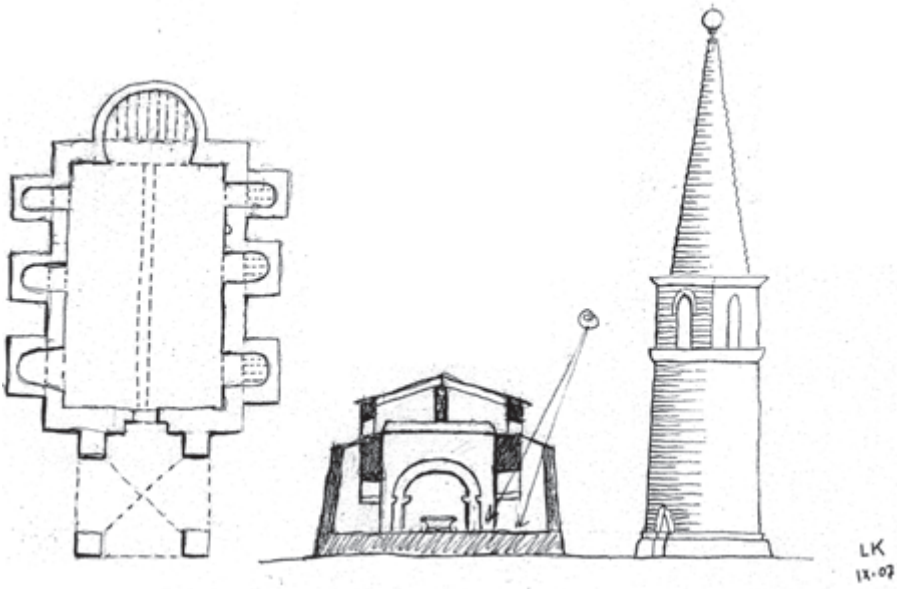
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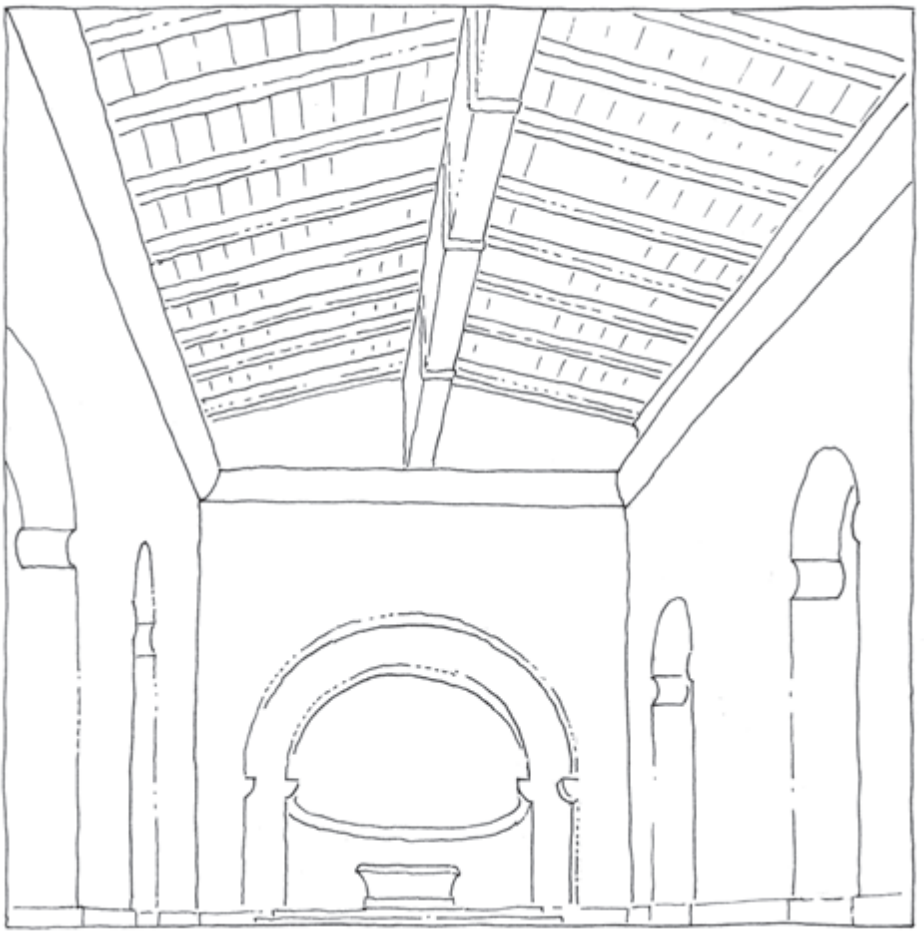


THE EVALUATION OF BUILDINGS BY THEIR WHOLE LIFE CYCLE

Industrial building methods are commonly perceived to be faster, more economical, and more efficient than artisanal methods. On several counts such fabricated myths have more to do with propaganda than with practical experience.

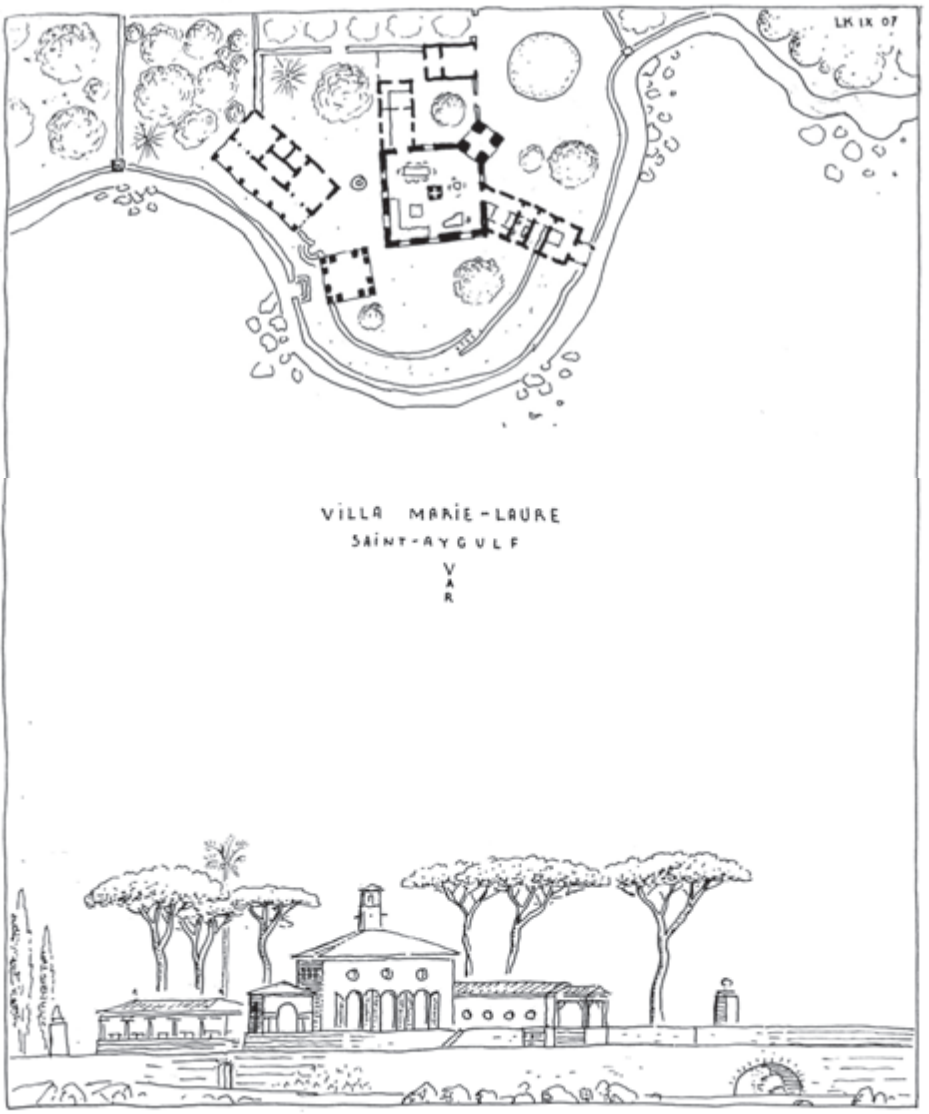
Firstly, it should be remembered that there are artisanal methods of fast building. After the 1692 bombardment of Brussels, which resulted in its near total destruction, the city with its spectacular Grand Place was conceived and built in its entirety within two years.

Three factors should be considered when evaluating the overall quality of a building:

1. The efficiency of the construction method. This can be correctly calculated only by adding the initial construction time to long-term maintenance time and relating the result to the life span of the building.

2. The economic efficiency of a building can be correctly calculated only by adding the initial construction costs to long-term maintenance costs and relating them to the life span of the building.

3. The ecological efficiency of a building can be correctly evaluated only if its total life span and its global context are taken into account.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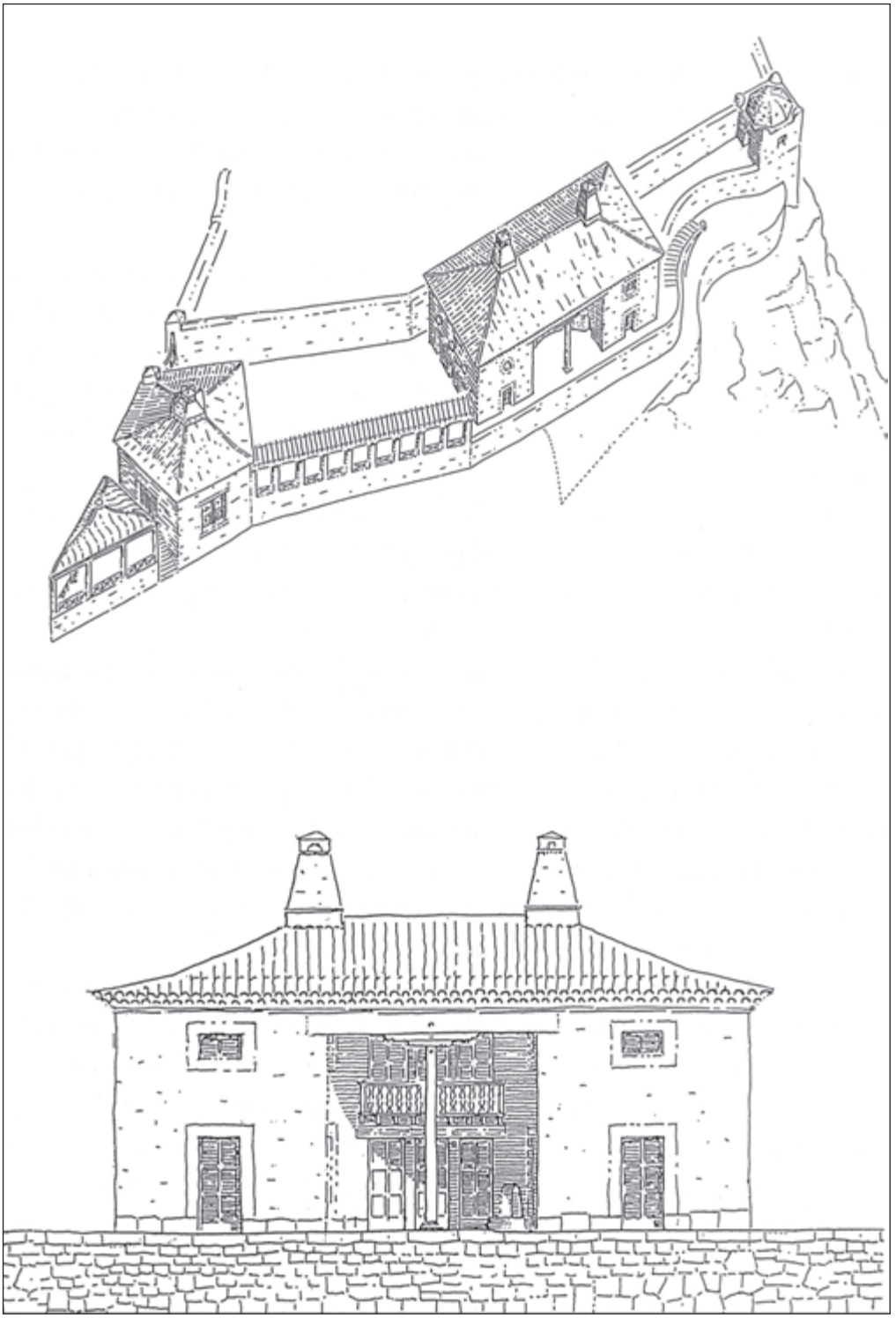


KNOWLEDGE OR KNOW-HOW
THE NEED FOR MODERN CRAFTSMANSHIP

In the most advanced industrial countries such as Germany, Italy, the US, or Japan it is no longer conceivable to promote industrial development to the detriment of crafts. The coexistence of these two production methods and ways of thinking is now largely recognized as a necessity for a modern economy.

On the architectural level, however, strong ideologically motivated resistance to this coexistence persists. Balanced development requires a profound change in mentality and the abandonment of outdated creeds that remain anchored in an all-out industrial and collectivist teleology. It must be remembered that in the genesis of artistic and architectural modernism the founding myths were established in a complete break with the past. The rest was pronounced prehistory: "There is no going back." Some events and some works were elevated to the rank of paradigms for a new humanity, for a necessarily all-industrial modernity. Anything that does not go along with the mainstream of this sectarian vision is disqualified as anachronistic, historic, dated, and superseded.

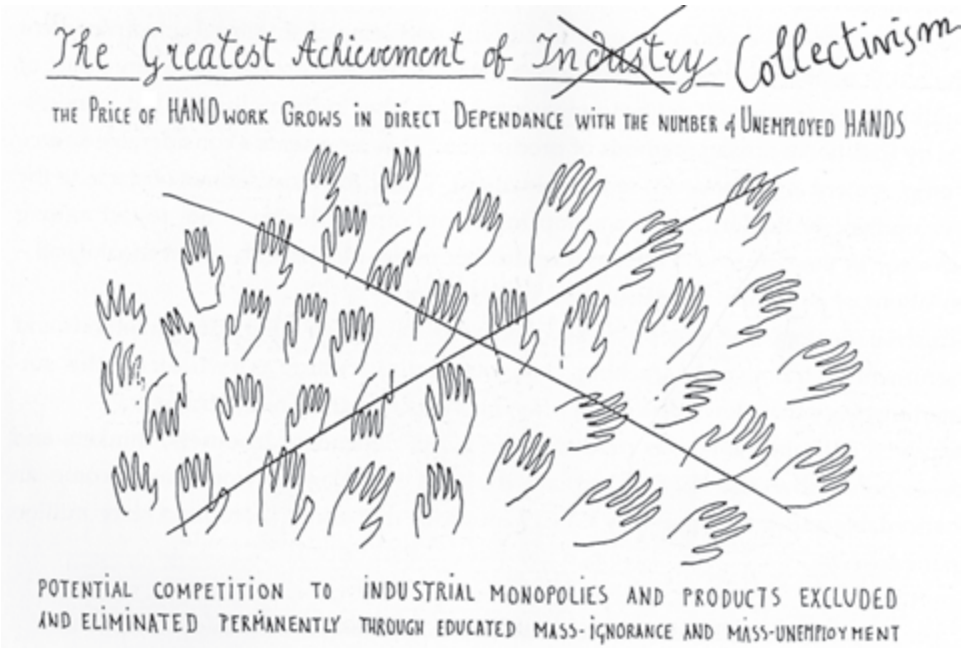
The break with the past and the parallel historicization of the past become a means of auto-definition, of domination and exclusion. Industrial ideology establishes itself as the sole productive and creative force of modernity. Consequently, traditional architecture's language, its system of representation, and, indeed, its very technology are excluded from the industrial future and hence from training. The immense capital of know-how held by thirty-nine building-related craft-trades, truly a monument of practical intelligence with an enormous potential for production, invention, and education, is disparaged as a preindustrial and historical phenomenon and, as such, is banned from technical training and economic practice and retained merely as a subject for archaeology, leisure, and history courses. Artisanal know-how is reduced to the level of theoretical and historical knowledge. Thus we are faced not only with a scandalous reduction in the productive capacities of society as a whole but also with the radical impoverishment of basic democratic choices relating to vocations and trades and, more generally, to the means of human self-expression. As a consequence, the artisanal practices necessary for an architecture of quality have been accorded the status of marginal or amateurish activities based primarily on self-training.

HOUSE FOR HELGA MÜLLER, ARONA, TENERIFE, L.K., 1986.

The immense demand for traditional architecture, which manifests itself in all free markets and democracies, must, for the time being, be satisfied with products of inferior quality, with ersatz and superficial copies. The development capacity of this market in terms of both quantity and quality is seriously curbed, if not totally blocked, by a general lack of adequate training and teaching facilities and of normal institutional representation.

It is now obvious everywhere that even the most energetic and imaginative industrialization policies will not result in full employment. And, in any case, full employment is not and cannot be an objective of industrialization – it is quite simply not within its aims and competence.

The "all-industrial" mentality is now faced with problems of structural unemployment that it is unable to avoid or resolve. We therefore have to accept that a large part of building in the future will not be implemented by further industrialization but, of necessity, by traditional artisanal methods of production. This represents a considerable source of employment and, above all, self-employment. Today, the most serious obstacle to the development of modern craftsmanship in the building industry is not found among users nor in the nature of crafts and trades but in the ideological – even theological – deviations of modernist sectarianism and bigotry.

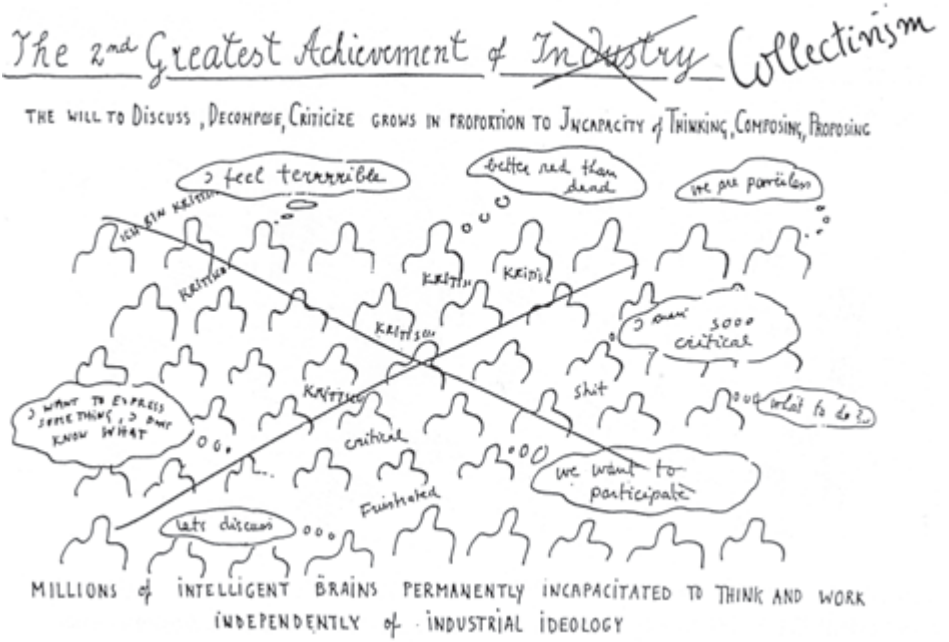

The Greatest Achievement of Industry Collectivism
THE PRICE OF HANDWORK GROWS IN DIRECT DEPENDANCE WITH THE NUMBER of UNEMPLOYED HANDS
POTENTIAL COMPETITION TO INDUSTRIAL MONOPOLIES AND PRODUCTS EXCLUDED AND ELIMINATED PERMANENTLY THROUGH EDUCATED MASS-IGNORANCE AND MASS-UNEMPLOYMENT

Industrial ideology and collectivism have devastated artisanal methods and instruments of training and teaching, and indeed artisanal culture as a whole: it is this outdated ideology that slows down and often prevents its partial reconstruction.

Industrial education methods produce specialized, dependent laborers, thinkers, and consciences. How else can we explain the fact that manual work has become an unaffordable rarity in the OECD "Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development" member countries that count more than sixty million unemployed hands?

We would do well to remember that a few thousand pairs of hands are capable of building the most beautiful cities and the most magnificent cathedrals. The problem of mass unemployment is a problem of industrial ideology, of its outdated political, moral, and transcendental ambitions.

The goals of national education policies, which are still essentially concerned with intellectual and scientific education in the service of an all-embracing industrial utopia, need to be revised, albeit partially. Neither the state nor industry will in the future provide enough jobs to employ the utterly dependent, disoriented, and confused masses released for work after fifteen years of obligatory theoretical and impractical general schooling. Ideally, the goal of obligatory schooling should be to make people independent and reliant on their individual gifts and vocations rather than transforming them into dependent, passive, and depressed masses.

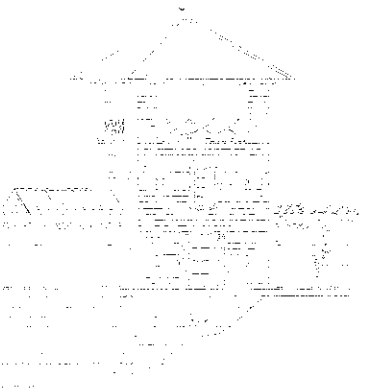

The 2nd Greatest Achievement of Industry Collectivism
THE WILL TO DISCUSS, DECOMPOSE, CRITICIZE GROWS IN PROPORTION TO INCAPACITY of THINKING, COMPOSING, PROPOSING
I feel terrrrible
better red than dead
we are partisans
KRITIK
KRITIK
KRITIK
KRITIK
KRITIK
critical
shit
I WANT TO EXPRESS SOME THING, I DON'T KNOW WHAT
we want to participate
Let's discuss
Finished
MILLIONS of INTELLIGENT BRAINS PERMANENTLY INCAPACITATED TO THINK AND WORK INDEPENDENTLY of INDUSTRIAL IDEOLOGY

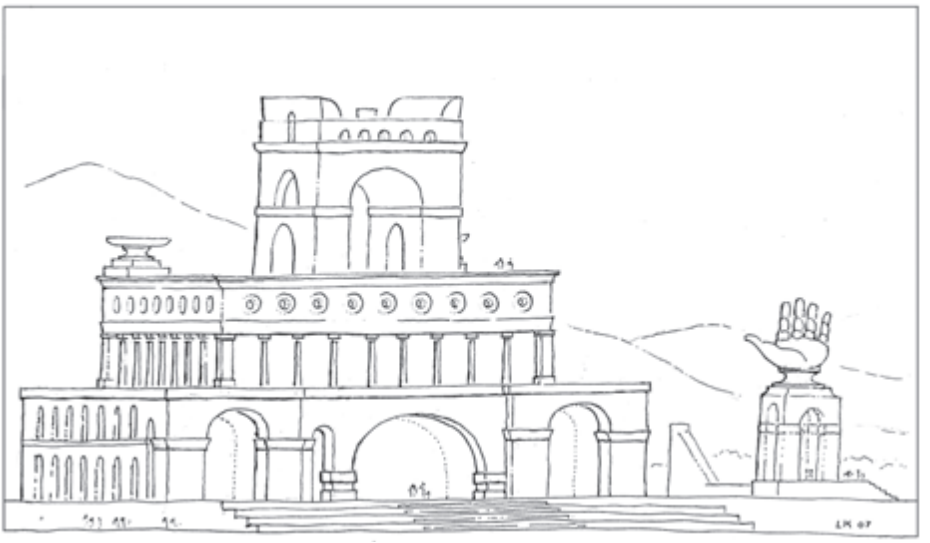
WEDDING HALL, AMIENS CATHEDRAL PARVIS, L.K. with LIAM O'CONNOR, 1988.

Very few people are gifted enough for the kind of theoretical and epistemological education that is now showered upon the masses; training and apprenticeship in practical crafts and know-how are the natural way to awaken the unique, personal talents of most individuals. Traditional craft disciplines are expressions of specific human skills and dispositions conditioned by human nature itself, not merely by socioeconomic relations at any given historical period. Even in a global industrial utopia the apprenticeship of traditional craft skills would have to be considered alongside science and the humanities as one of the three privileged ways of awakening and training the mind and the body. The suppression of traditional craft skills represents a catastrophic impoverishment of human self-expression, a limitation of human capacity for independence and liberty.

The reconstruction and promotion of a broad, highly qualified, autonomous craft industry is necessary for the reconstruction of a dynamic urban civilization. Such policies cannot rely on demagoguery or on vacuous promises to the desperate masses. They appeal to the force of character and initiative of individuals, for the worth of a society depends entirely upon the worth of its individuals. Contrary to all forms of collectivism, modern traditional culture, freed from obsolete and mystical residues of the past, requires that people should assume personal responsibility for their ideas, their acts, and their works.

Personal independence, individuality, and responsibility, work that procures satisfaction, identity, and autonomy at every level of talent and intelligence are the guiding values of such a culture. A great many citizens identify strongly with these values, making them absolutely and positively modern.





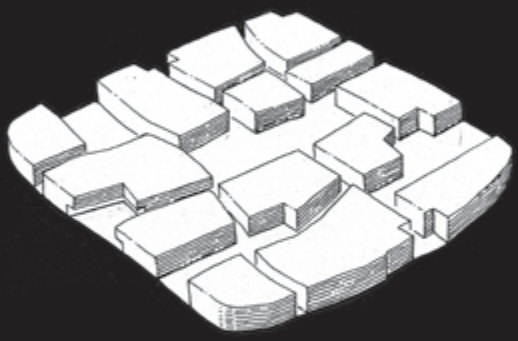
SOUVENIR DE CHANDIGARH

Opposite and Below: NEW SEAT OF THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT, PLACE ROYALE, BRUSSELS, LÉON KRIER and BONTINCK with ATLANTE, 1993. This project comprises the restructuring and architectural remodeling of several historic buildings disfigured by years of neglect and bureaucratic incompetence. The labyrinthine structure is divided into three separate buildings, each restored and completed using its original construction techniques, architectural language, materials, and colors. The result is an entirely new, original ensemble marked by a resolute, radical modernity. Irrespective of style, high-quality contemporary buildings cannot be built without highly skilled craftsmanship.

RES PUBLICA
CLASSICAL

MONUMENTS
WITHOUT
STREETS or SQUARES

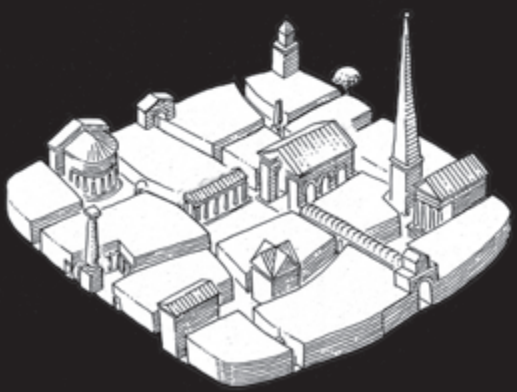
+



RES ECONOMICA
VERNACULAR

STREETS and SQUARES
WITHOUT
MONUMENTS

=



CIVITAS
CLASSICAL+VERNACULAR

LK '83

THE
TRUE
CITY

CHAPTER IX

THE ARCHITECTURAL TUNING OF SETTLEMENTS

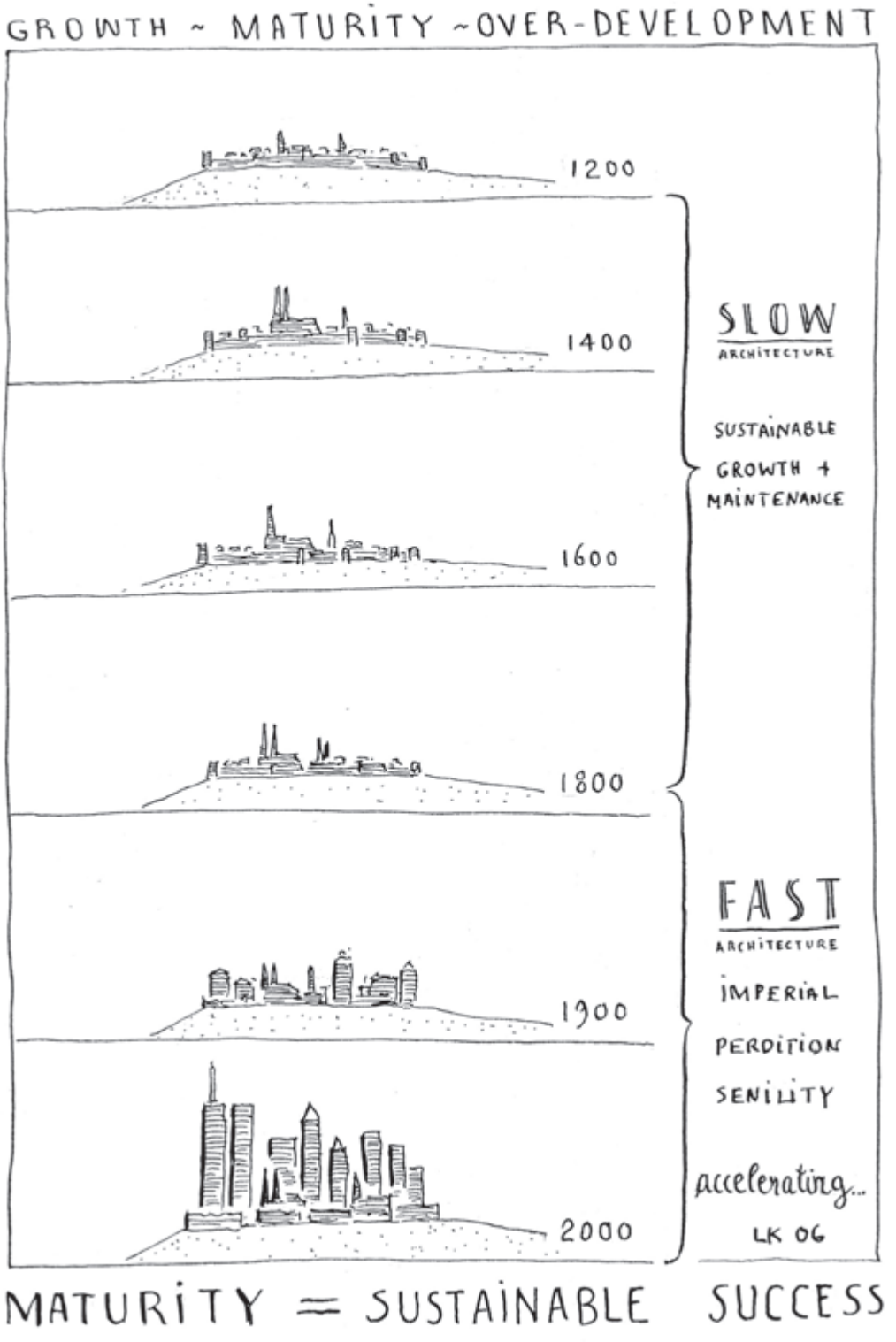
THE ARCHITECTURAL TUNING OF SETTLEMENTS

I was always intrigued by the fact that so many "ideal towns" throughout the ages like Palmanova, Salines-de-Chaux, Neuf, Brisach, Timgad, Richelieu, "Law-of-the-Indies" towns, could be boring, despite impressive displays of good intentions, good design and materials, and good construction. High design-control and generous means are evidently not enough to create what is commonly perceived and enjoyed as a good and beautiful city. Its radiance does not come from a sheer display of power and wealth. It more likely results from the felicitous relationship of its buildings, town form, street-plan, skyline, and geographic position.

Human settlements are structured into private and public realms, whatever their purpose, size or location. Yet, neither public nor private enterprise generate, a robust and elegant public realm as a mere by-product of its activities. Its beauty, its socializing power are the fruit of conscious intent, of civilizing vision.

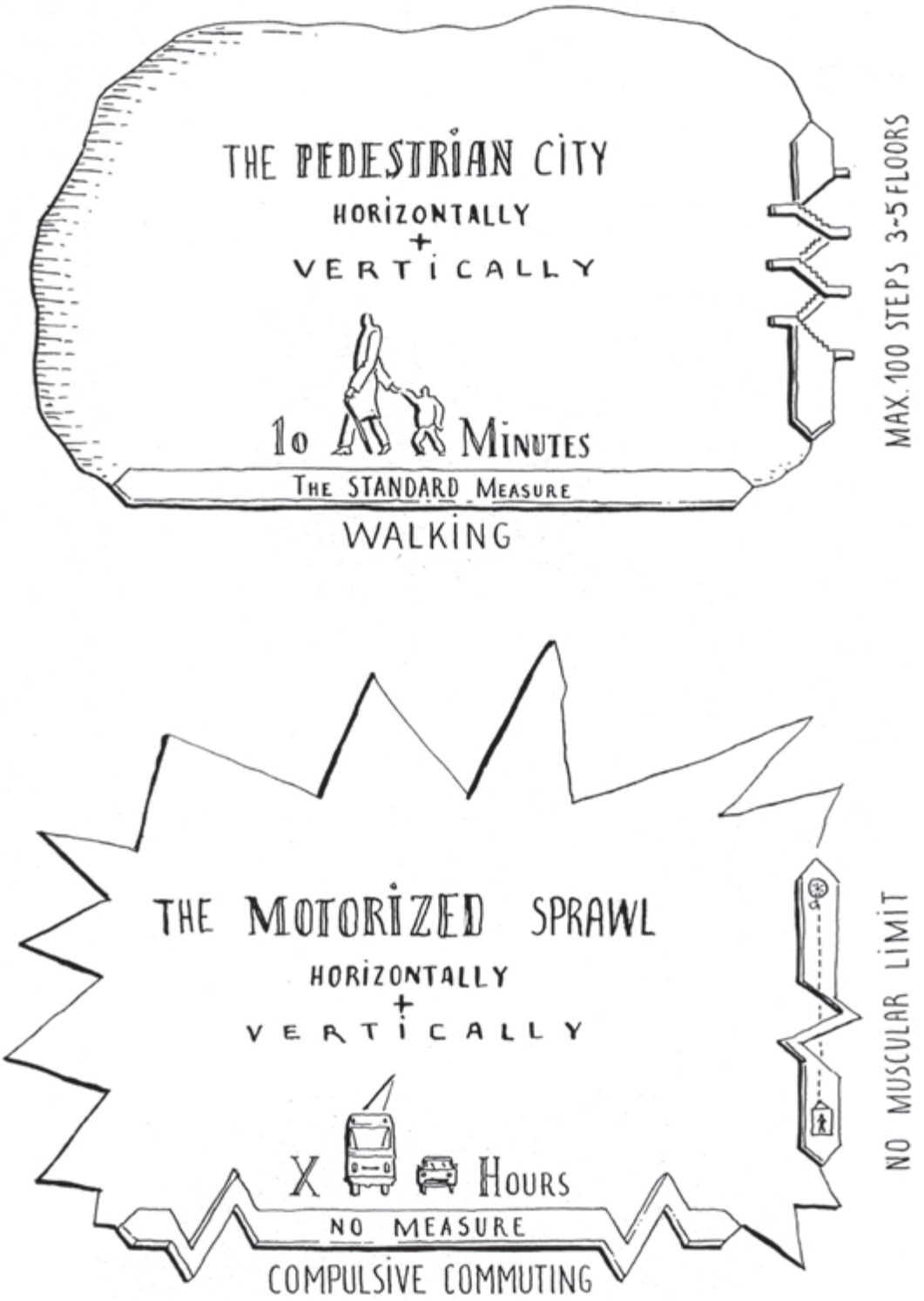
The question addressed here is "what are the unrenounceable architecture and urban ingredients that make a beautiful city"? "What kind of architecture suits best for what kind of settlement pattern, in what kind of quantities, in what dosage"? Traditional urbanism delivers the instrument that lends itself to architectural tuning, to the harmonizing of complexity.

CROTONE ACROPOLIS,
L.K. AND PIER CARLO BONTEMPI, VENICE BIENNALE 2006.


GROWTH ~ MATURITY ~OVER-DEVELOPMENT
1200
1400
1600
1800
1900
2000
SLOW
ARCHITECTURE
SUSTAINABLE
GROWTH +
MAINTENANCE
FAST
ARCHITECTURE
IMPERIAL
PERDITION
SENILITY
accelerating...
LK 06
MATURITY = SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS

Sub-urbanism instead segregates complexities by law; its excessive horizontal dilutions and vertical congestions do not lend themselves to aesthetic tuning. They are realizations of a runaway entropy, of hyper growth unfolding beyond human control. The scaleless uniformity, aesthetic poverty, and general vulgarity of "sprawl-city" are the reification of futureless frenzy. The increasing rarity and exponential "costs" of fossil and nuclear fuels will in the coming decades enforce and return to ecological technology, to muscle-power economies, and to traditional settlement patterns, relying essentially on local energy resources. Traditional urban design allows competing and contrasting social activities and forces to grow into mature, meaningful, and ecological organisms. They become second nature, as if grown out of the ground. Their building techniques transcend time and space, are universal and constituent of enduring civilization.

New Urbanism has some very successful realizations to display, but they are products of personal perseverance rather than of accepted development policies. The "Urban Transect" by Andrés Duany, is a foundational document for understanding and for restructuring our countries in intelligent and ecological ways. I feel, however, that the "architectural tuning," the aesthetic structuring of large complexes is not mastered. It has to rely more on intuition than on solid intelligence. The purpose of the following is to start a ball rolling.


THE PEDESTRIAN CITY
HORIZONTALLY
+
VERTICALLY
10 MINUTES
THE STANDARD MEASURE
WALKING
MAX. 100 STEPS 3-5 FLOORS
THE MOTORIZED SPRAWL
HORIZONTALLY
+
VERTICALLY
X HOURS
NO MEASURE
COMPULSIVE COMMUTING
NO MUSCULAR LIMIT

Mature CITY

EXCESSIVE Vertical & Horizontal EXPANSION

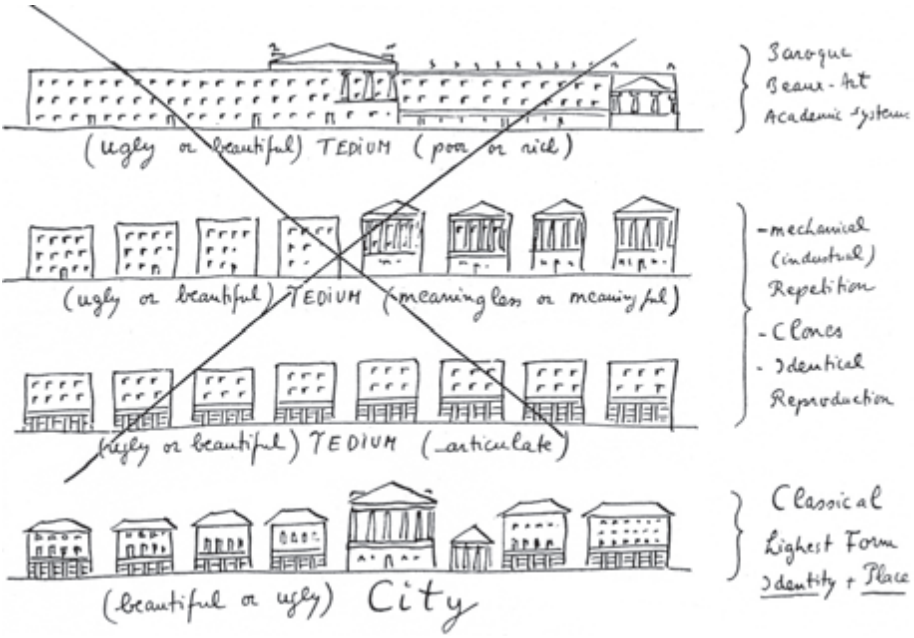
Organic EXPANSION through MULTIPLICATION

Functional zoning is the instrument of a global mental environmental catastrophe. A de-constructional operation, which under the guise of planning literally de-structures our societies and the planet's future, ensures the maximum wastage of land, time, and energies in everyday social performances. It also leads to a radical semantic de-structuration of urbanism and architecture. In short to sub-urbanism and modernism.

Overwhelming architectural monotony and uniformity are the logical expression of functional zoning and geographic segregation, architectural acrobatism and kitsch their pathetic cultural corollary.

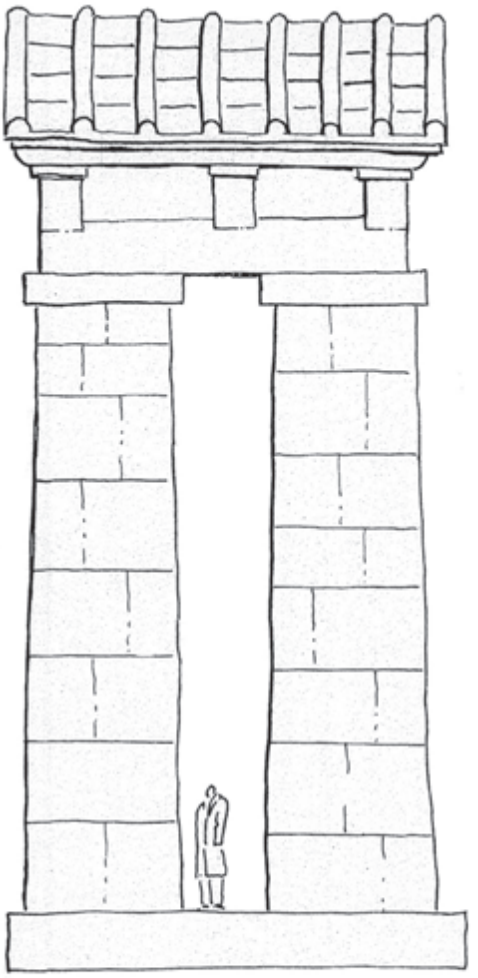
The traditional city instead is organized in smaller or larger families of pedestrian-sized integrated urban quarters. They are limited horizontally and vertically to what a pedestrian can walk comfortably in a routine way. These quarters are of mixed-use and mixed-income. Their architectural variety is the manifest expression of great functional and social complexity.

Horizontal and vertical sprawl, the monochord over-extension, over-population and ill-location of metropoles, their hyperscaled single-use buildings and zones in the form of skyscrapers, landscrapers, stripmalls, and residential ghettos, are the dinosaurs of an ending fossil-fuel age of synthetic culture. They represent vertical and horizontal forms of over-development, of logistic over-extension of imperial hubris; asocial, unecological, attractive only from an Olympian distance. Monumentalism, fake-classicism, architectural *logghorea,* and expressionism are but an impotent escape from the sterile architectural stutter of cities and landscapes, degraded to storage-areas for building clones.



Also today, and in all modern societies there exist public and private buildings, sacred and profane buildings, buildings for assemblies or for single individuals, buildings for rest and industry, for music and for silence, for honoring or for punishing, for hiding or for displaying, for production or for consumption, for commercial and institutional purposes, for defense and for war.

The aesthetic poverty of sprawl is not due to reduced social intercourse, but to the excessive geographic isolation of its activities, to the absurd horizontal dispersal and vertical packing of uses that have nothing in common but their sameness. The hollow priapism of the utilitarian skyscraper and the pathological monumentalism of totalitarian bombast are the proliferating symbols of catastrophic hubris, of loss of human limits, of humaneness *tout court*.



MONSTER
"SHED"

monumental scale
VERNACULAR PROSE

GROSS
POMPOUS
WEAK

MONUMENTALIST
BUILDING

MIDGET
"monument"

vernacular scale
MONUMENTAL RETHORIC

EFFETE
PRETENTIOUS
INAPPROPRIATE

MINIATURE
Architecture

HUMAN DIMENSIONS

DOMESTIC SCALE

TECTONIC LOGIC

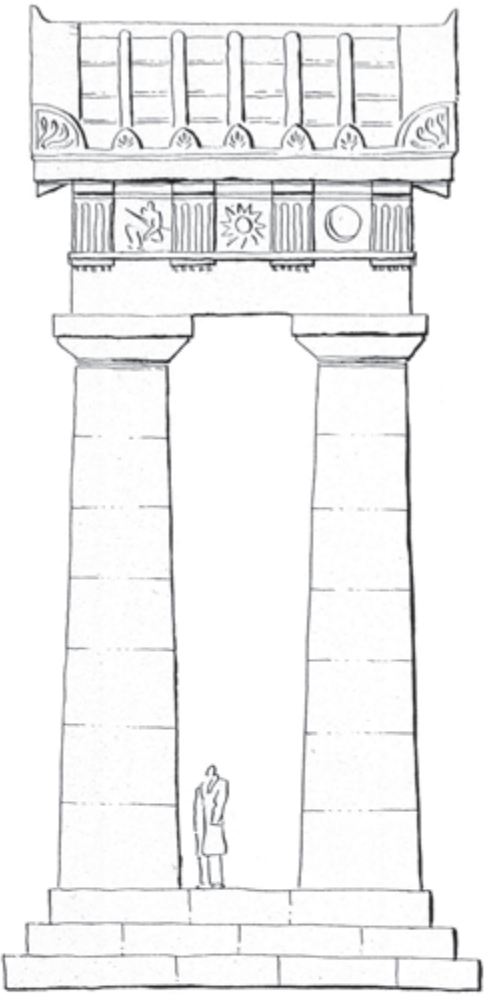
ARTISANAL

"MATERIALOGICAL"

TECHNOLOGICAL MIMESIS

RES PRIVATA

Building



SUPERHUMAN DIMENSIONS

MONUMENTAL SCALE

ARCHITECTONIC LOGIC

ARTISTIC

"MATERIALOGICAL"

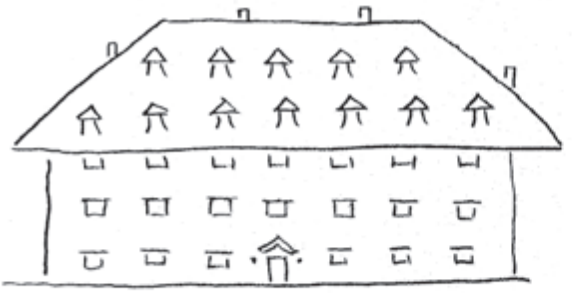
SYMBOLIC ENCODED MIMESIS

RES PUBLICA

ARCHITECTURE

PIAZZA MATTEOTTI, MODENA, L.K. AND PIER CARLO BONTEMPI, 2001.

SIZE × TYPE × EXPRESSION



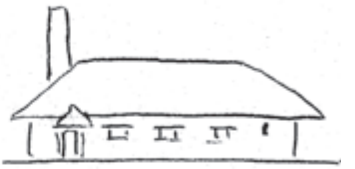
Cottage PALACE~SIZE
" COTTAGE LOOK"

PALACE Cottage-size
"PALACE LOOK"

VERNACULAR X classical

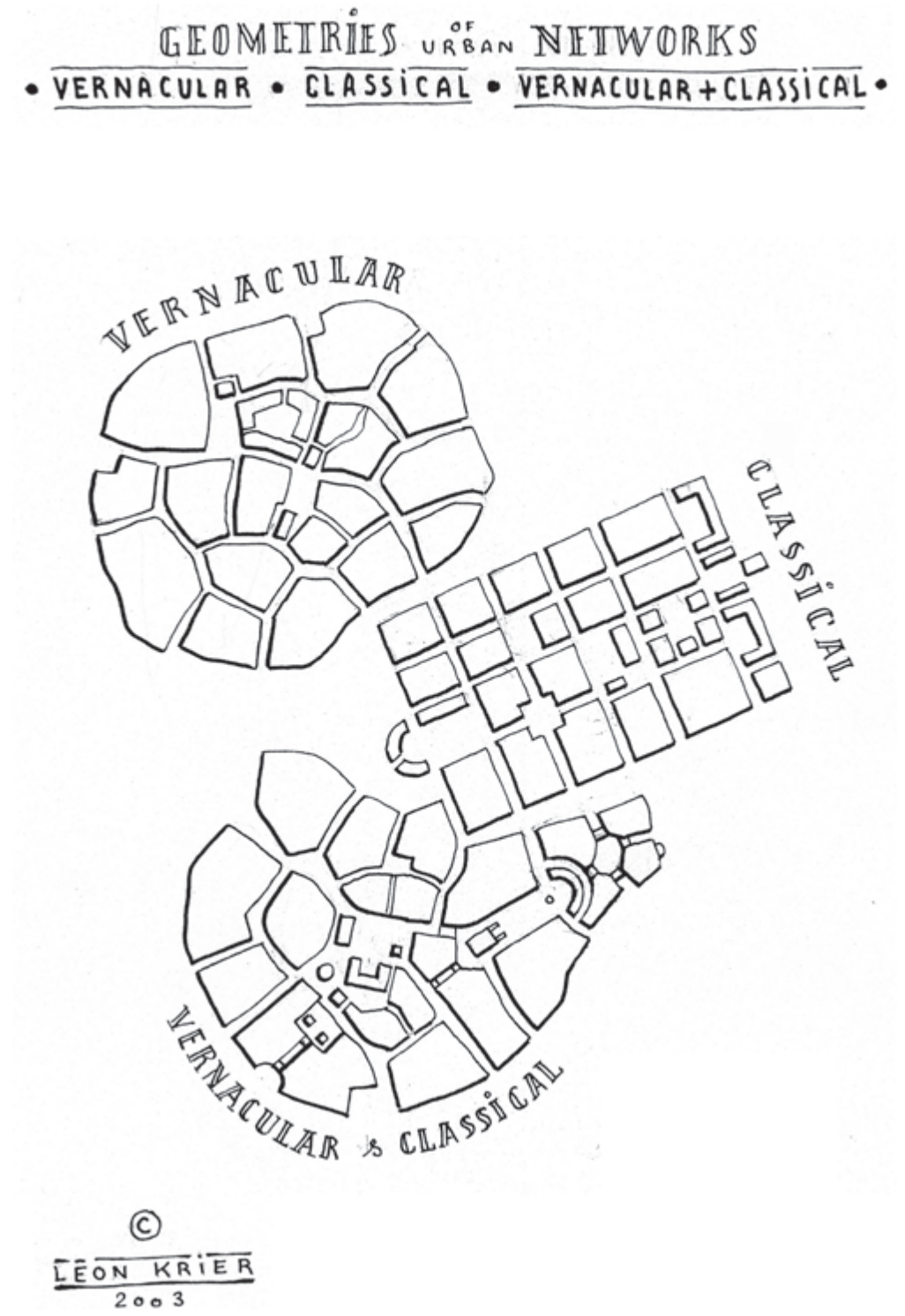
USE & MISUSE

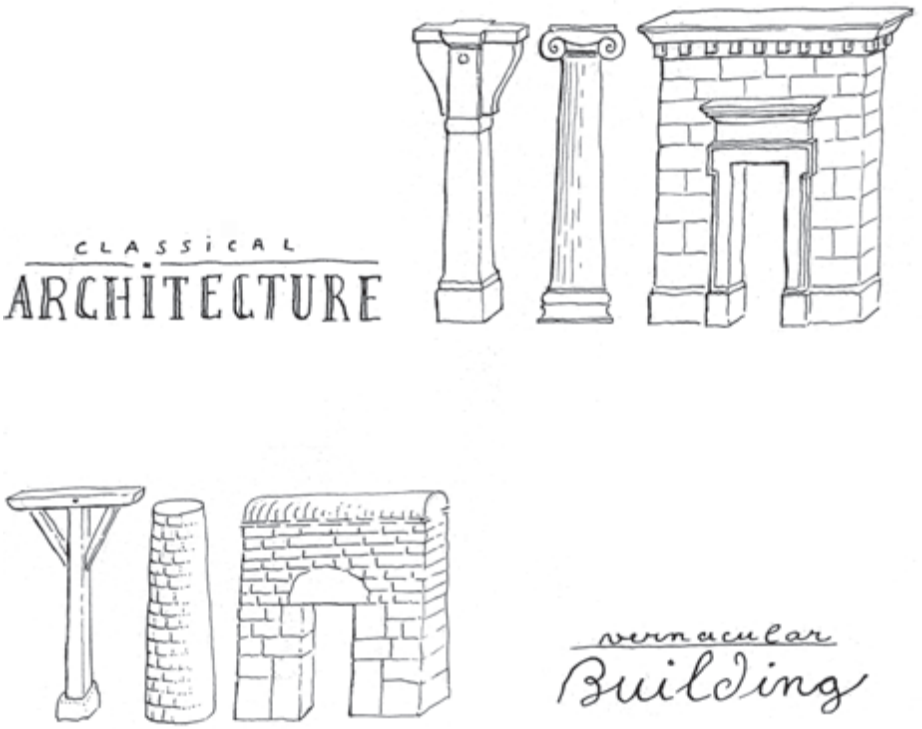
PALACE ~ PALACE-SIZE



Cottage ~ Cottage size

CLASSICAL & vernacular


GEOMETRIES OF URBAN NETWORKS
• VERNACULAR • CLASSICAL • VERNACULAR + CLASSICAL •
VERNACULAR
CLASSICAL
VERNACULAR & CLASSICAL
© LEON KRIER 2003



The vernacular and the classical are familiar classifications in the field of building where they distinguish between building activity as craft or as art form. In the realm of languages they designate the differences between the spoken and the written languages, between idiom and text, prose and poetry, and, by extension, between custom and law.

I propose to introduce the terms "classical" and "vernacular" into urbanism and planning in order to name the various geometries of geographic circulation – networks of public-spaces and building-arrangement. Le Corbusier famously contrasted the meandering geometry of the "donkey path" with the Euclidean rectitude of the "path of man." Similarly, the French language distinguishes between "*ensembles spontanés*" and "*ensembles ordonnés.*" Quite as if the spontaneous was necessarily a factor of disorder; that conversely the straight and square was of a higher class altogether, was rationality itself.

Spontaneous ensembles are no more "medieval" than grid iron plans are "modern." The curvilinear is not necessarily romantic and the rectangular not automatically rational or unartistic. The conscious use of vernacular and classical architectural modes and their combination with adequate network geometries allows us to create new settlements that rival the best ensembles of the past.

TUNING OF URBAN NETWORK & ARCHITECTURE

© LK 03

URB. [U] URBANISM • NETWORK OF PUPLIC ROUTES & SPACES
ARCH. [A] ARCHITECTURE • PUBLIC/CIVIC — PRIVATE DOMESTIC
VERN. [V] VERNACULAR • INFORMAL - ORGANIC GEOMETRY - PROSE
CLASS. [C] CLASSICAL • FORMAL - EUCLIDEAN GEOMETRY - POETRY

I	URB. VERN. ARCH. VERN.	UV AV	• VILLAGES • HAMLETS • PUEBLOS • • FARMS • "ENSEMBLES SPONTANÉS" • POAT-GRIMAUD •
II	URB. VERN. ARCH. CLASS	UV AC	• ATHENS ACROPOLIS • AGORA • REPUBLICAN FORUM ROME • OLYMPIA • NARA TEMPLES • MONTI SACRI
III	URB. VERN. ARCH. VERN. + CLASS.	UV AV+C	• VENEZIA • LUCCA • UZES • • SAN GIMIGNANO • ÎLE DE LA CITÉ • • ROTHENBURG • DINKELSBÜHL • SIENA • ASSOS • BELLAGGIO • SEVILLE
IV	URB. CLASS. ARCH. VERN.	UC AV	• BARRACKS • CONCENTRATION CAMPS • • PRISONS • "VILLE RADIEUSE" • • HILBERSEIMER BERLIN • INDUSTRIAL UTOPIAS • • SPANISH ENSANCHES • NEW DEAL HOUSING •
V	URB. CLASS. ARCH. CLASS.	UC AC	• IMPERIAL CAPITALS • BATH • VERSAILLES • • BABYLON • KARNAK • FORBIDDEN CITY • RENAISSANCE UTOPIAS • BEAUX-ARTS • TURIN • • HAUSSMAN - PARIS • SPEER - GERMANIA •
VI	URB. CLASS. ARCH. VERN + CLASS.	UC AV+C	• PRIENE • TIMGAD • KYOTO • WINDSOR FL • • CHARLOTTESVILLE • WILLIAMSBURG • • YALE CAMPUS • JEFFERSON GRID • • SALINES DE CHAUX • LAW OF INDIES • BASTIDES TOWNS • FIRENZUOLA
VII	URB. VERN. + CLASS. ARCH. VERN.	UV+C AV	• HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB • • SUBURBIA • • MODERNIST NEW TOWNS • UK • FRANCE • • VOISIN • CHINA • BRASILIA •
VIII	URB. VERN. + CLASS ARCH. CLASS.	UV+C AC	• PALMYRA • LEPTIS • CHANTILLY CASTLE • RESIDENZ STÄDTE SCHWETZINGEN • POTSDAM • • VATICAN-CITY • CESKY-KRUMLOV • • BORDEAUX • KREMLIN •
IX	URB. VERN. + CLASS. ARCH. VERN. + CLASS.	UV+C AV+C	• PIENZA • NOLLI-ROME • PRAGUE • ISE • ISTAMBUL • CAIRO • DRESDEN • CUSCO • SAMARKAND • KATMANDU • LHASSA • NEW URBANISM • POUNDBURY

LK © 03

HISTORIC EXAMPLES

PIAZZA MATTEOTTI, MODENA, L.K. AND PIER CARLO BONTEMPI, 2001.

"The Architectural Tuning of Settlements" conceptualizes the analysis and manipulation of architectural and urban realities that so far are considered to be the by-product of socio-political contingencies rather than of conscious aesthetic intent.

The three charts (historic examples; urban perspectives; urban plans) illustrate the nine possible combinations of vernacular-classical urbanism and architecture. In reality we rarely encounter pure samples but almost always combinations of the nine categories. The latter help us to better understand and appreciate historic places. They also allow us to plan more consciously the ingredients of large urban or building complexes, tune new buildings with existing locations. According to circumstance there are rational justifications to plan short meandering or straight open vistas. What is equally certain is that these require extremely different architectural framing.

TUNING OF URBAN ARCHITECTURE
« TUA »

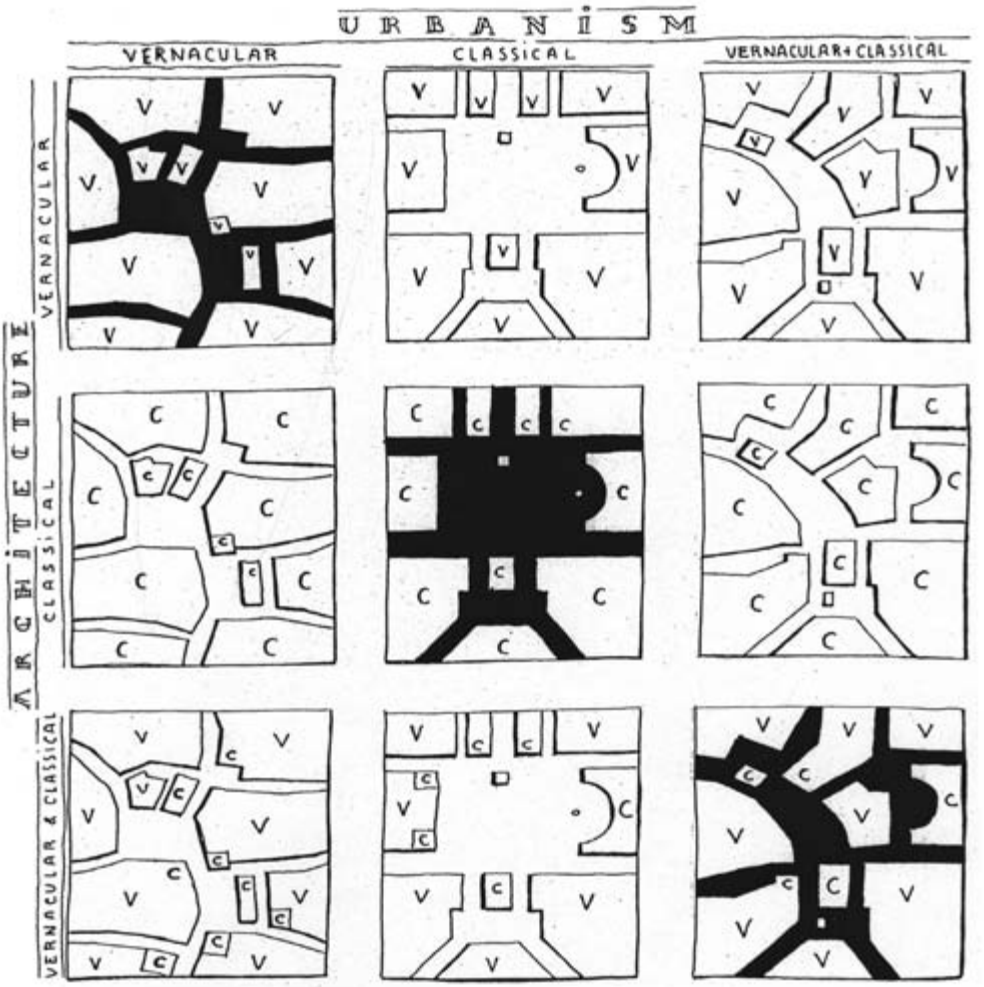


CHART OF PERMUTATIONS

TYPES OF T·U·A

I	IV	VII
II	V	VIII
III	VI	IX

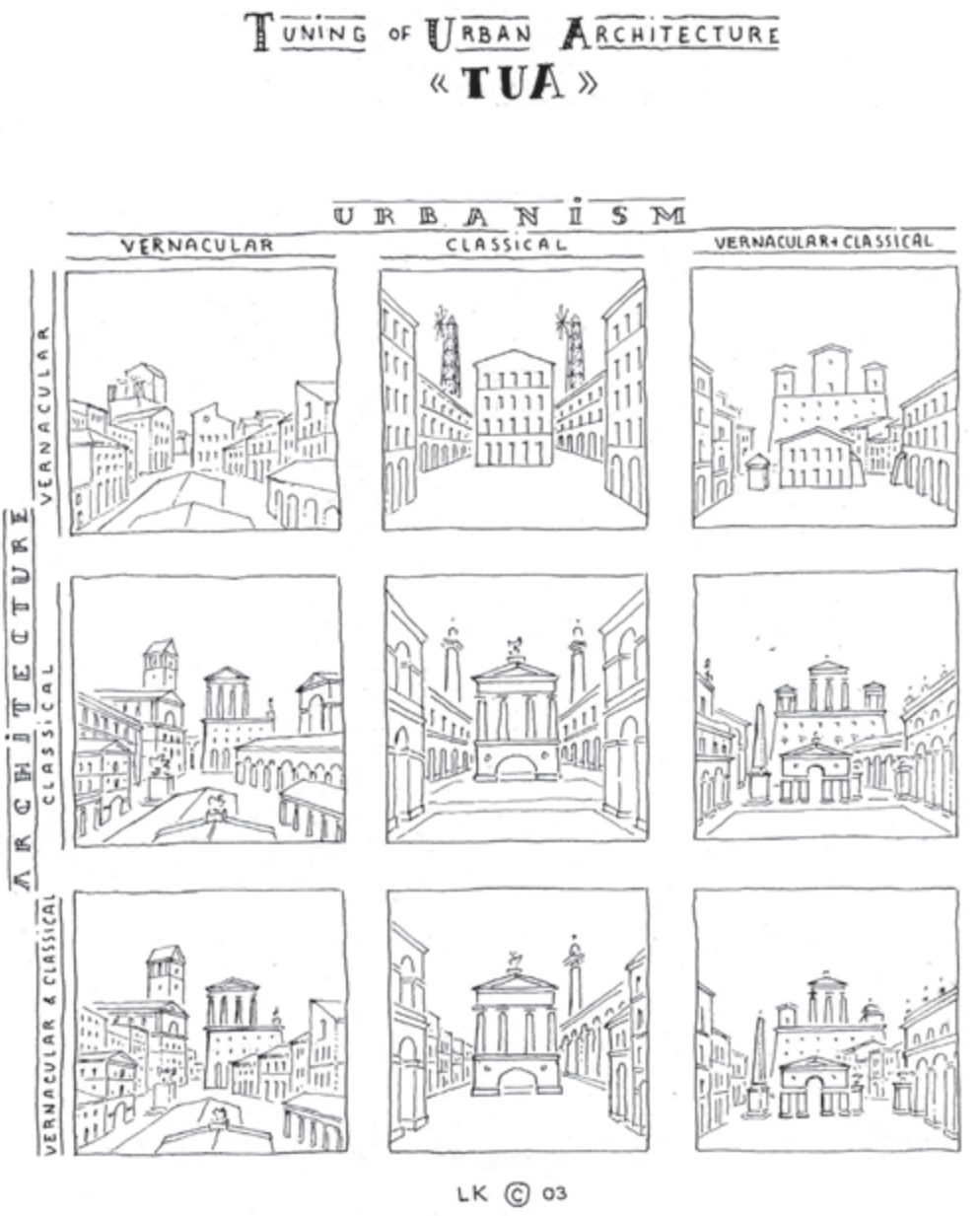
	UV	UC	UC+V
AV	UV AV	UC AV	UVC AV
AC	UV AC	UC AC	UVC AC
AV+C	UV AVC	UC AVC	UVC AVC

QUALITY OF ARCH.

PP MISMATCH
P POOR
S SATISFACTORY
I IDEAL
G GOOD
GG NECESSARY

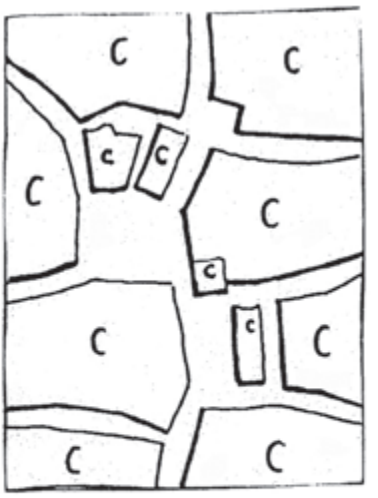
DOSAGE

S	PP	P
G	GG	S
G	S	I



The question addressed by these taxonomies is, what kind of architecture (vernacular; classical; vernacular + classical) suits best what kind of settlement pattern (vernacular: classical; vernacular + classical)? In what climate? In what geographical location? In what topography?

I ARCHITECTURE • VERNACULAR
URBANISM • VERNACULAR



II ARCHITECTURE • CLASSICAL
URBANISM • VERNACULAR

You can best judge the various combinations, dosages, and tunings by visiting historic places and letting your feelings reign. The "quality of dosage" register illustrates my own sentiment and experience. I find that generally regular geometric and parallel public spaces require a high degree of architectural order. Streets and squares with non-parallel configurations can accept more modest architecture, with freer, less imposing compositions. In general, modest architecture is not appropriate for highly formal public spaces.

Places of quality can be created only if plan, skyline, and organization form an evident bond, be they spectacular or modest in their means.

A good town plan exploits all available geometric and topographic devices. Excessive regularity and its opposite, the forced irregularity of public spaces, produce poor results. The spirit of a place may sometimes spring from a solution that is in conflict with the site conditions: terre-pleins, promontories, bridges, dams, etc.

Vernacular architecture is ill-suited to face regularized rectilinear, monumental public spaces, and visual foci.

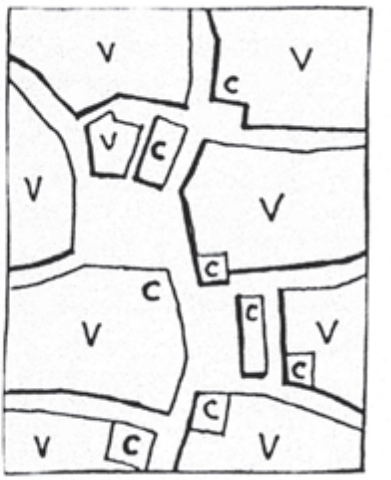
Take for example the vernacular cottages of an organically arranged village; straighten out their meandering alignments, widen and regularize their streets and commons; you will not only loose the charm but also the character, quality, and strength of the spontaneous groupings.

Similarly if you flatten out San Francisco on a plain, its architecture will look like a poor collection of incongruous products. Here it is the topography that vernacularizes the Euclidian gridiron plan, and they combine well with the helter-skelter nature of the architecture.

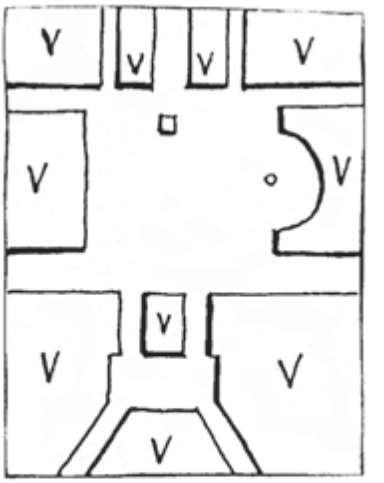
In fact gridiron urban plans on planar ground need highly articulate classical architecture in order to gain a recognizable identity or quite simply to be bearable. Imagine Haussman-Paris stripped of its elaborate classical adornments and highly figurative public monuments. Aesthetically poor urban environments are often not the result of poverty of means but simply of an ill-tuning of architecture and urbanism.

My village has but few signs of classicism other than those locked inside the church or framing the odd doorway.

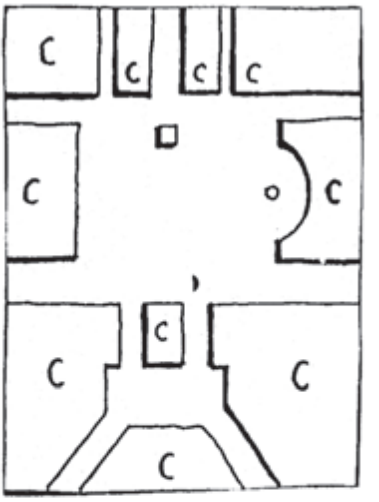
Yet to me it is paradise.



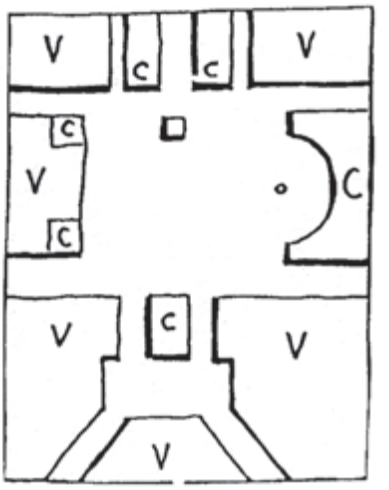
III ARCHITECTURE • VERNACULAR + CLASSICAL
URBANISM • VERNACULAR



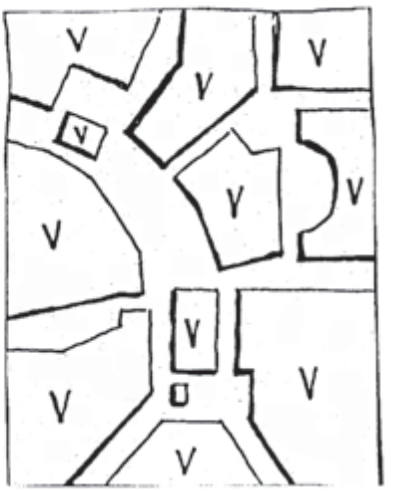
IV ARCHITECTURE • VERNACULAR
URBANISM • CLASSICAL



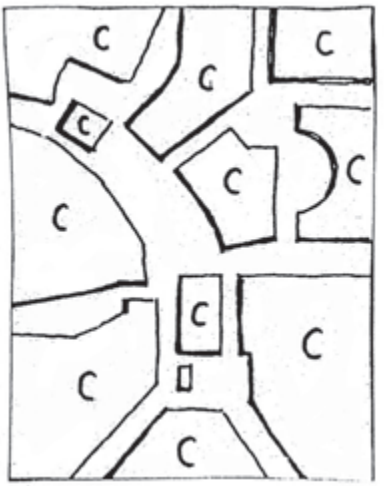
V ARCHITECTURE • CLASSICAL
URBANISM • CLASSICAL



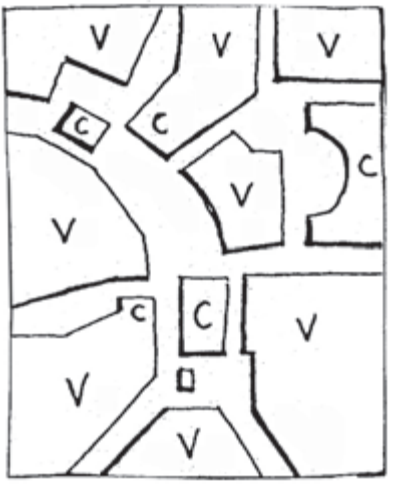
VI ARCHITECTURE • VERNACULAR + CLASSICAL
URBANISM • CLASSICAL



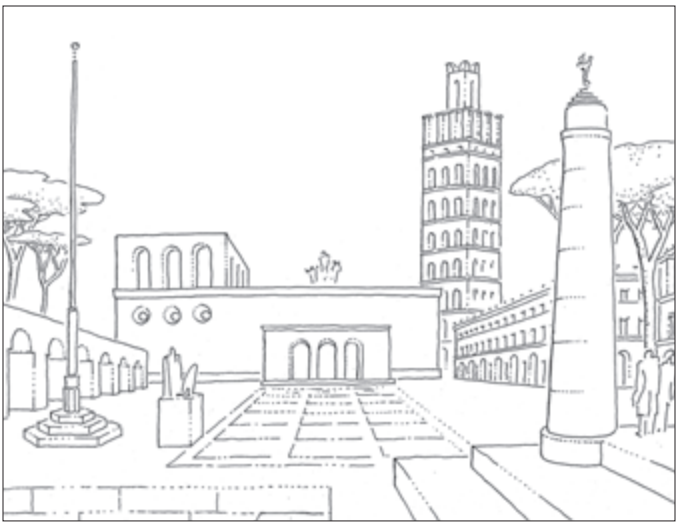
VII ARCHITECTURE • VERNACULAR
URBANISM • VERNACULAR + CLASSICAL



VIII ARCHITECTURE • CLASSICAL
URBANISM • VERNACULAR + CLASSICAL

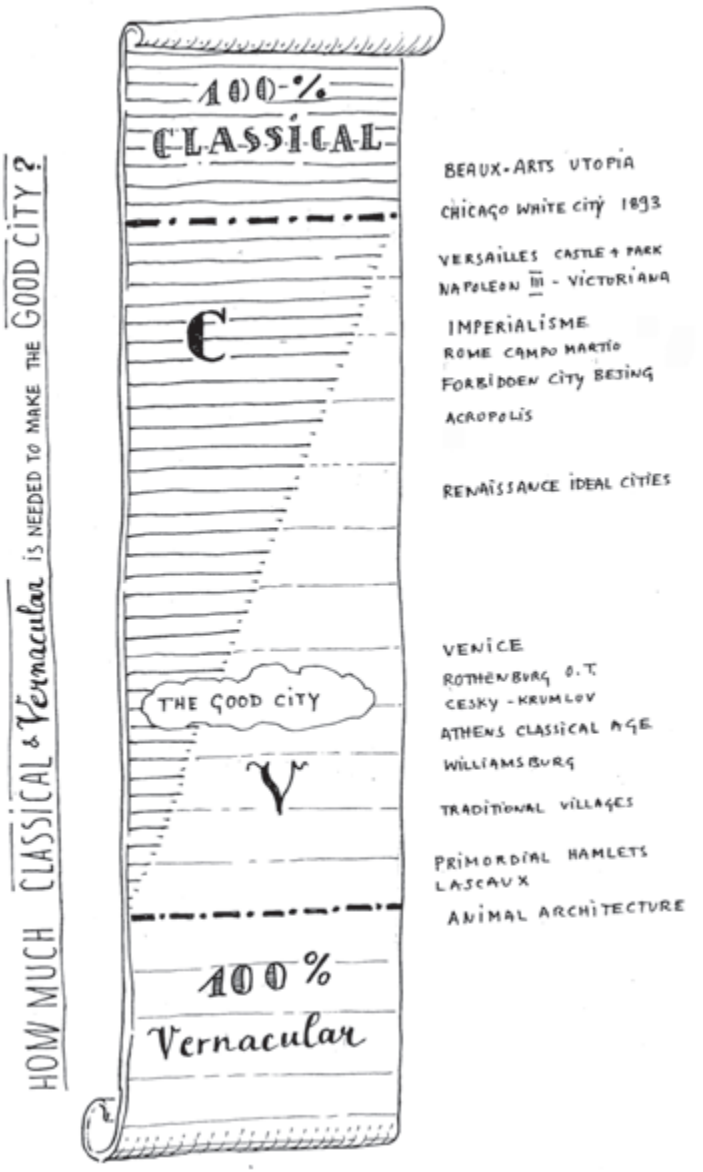


IX ARCHITECTURE • VERNACULAR + CLASSICAL
URBANISM • VERNACULAR + CLASSICAL



What mix of vernacular and classical is needed to make a great city is not certain. Landform, material color, and quality of ground and sky can modify the proportions. This essay is not an exhaustive study but an introduction to possibilities and necessities that are now considered little. Humanity's mimetic and competitive nature are characteristics of life. They are active in construction and destruction, in peace and war.

ARCHITECTURAL TUNING OF
URBAN COMPOSITION
〈vernacular & classical〉
vernacularissimus
AUSTERITY VERNACULAR
vernacular & CLASSICAL
CULTURAL APOGEE
CLASSICISSIMUS
IMPERIAL CARNIVAL CLASSICISM



The exponential growth of human powers through the use of fossil fuels has not been accompanied with an increase in aesthetic and moral judgement. Tuning is about how to reach and hold the golden mean. It is what lies between the everless and the evermore. Between indigence and overabundance.

To be able to choose the middle way we have to experience and know the cost of the extremes. However, architecture and human communities are too dangerous a mix to be subjected to extreme experiments for the sake of it.

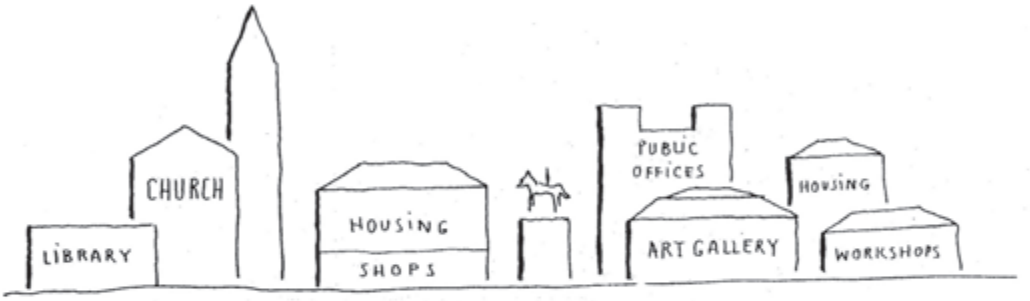
TO MAKE a CITY

MIXED USE

IS NECESSARY BUT NOT SUFFICIENT

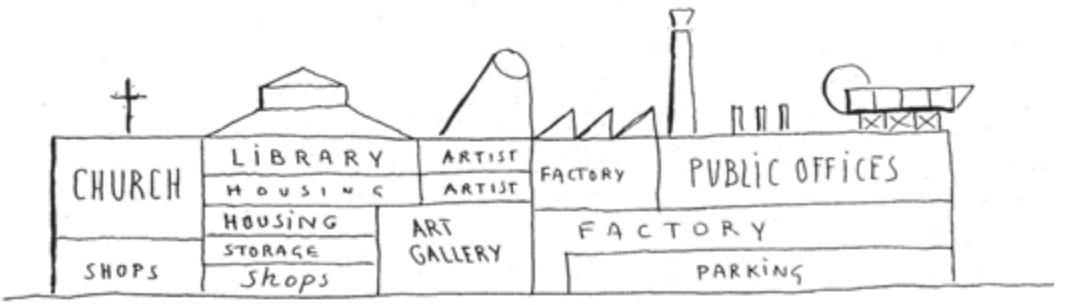
a condition

I



CITY as LAND ~ FLOTILLA

x number of architects



"CITY" as LAND ~ LINER

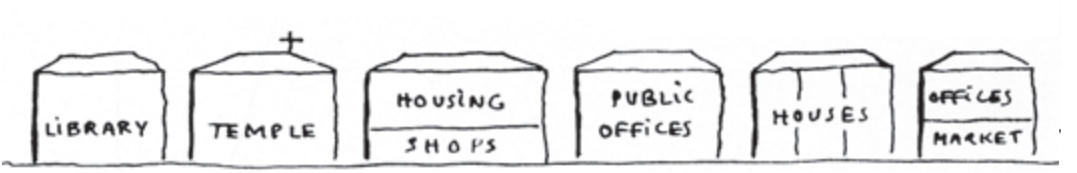
1 architect

TO MAKE a CITY

MIXED USE

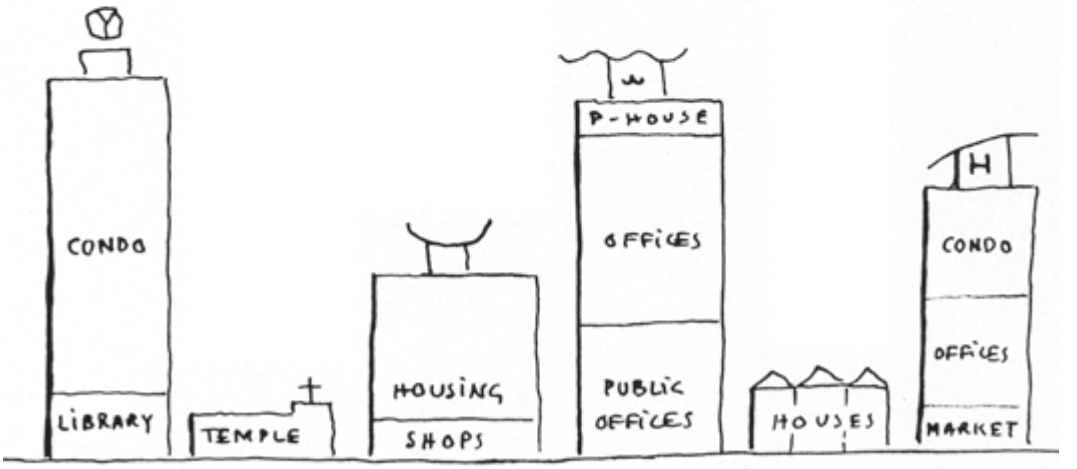
IS a NECESSARY BUT NOT A SUFFICIENT condition

II



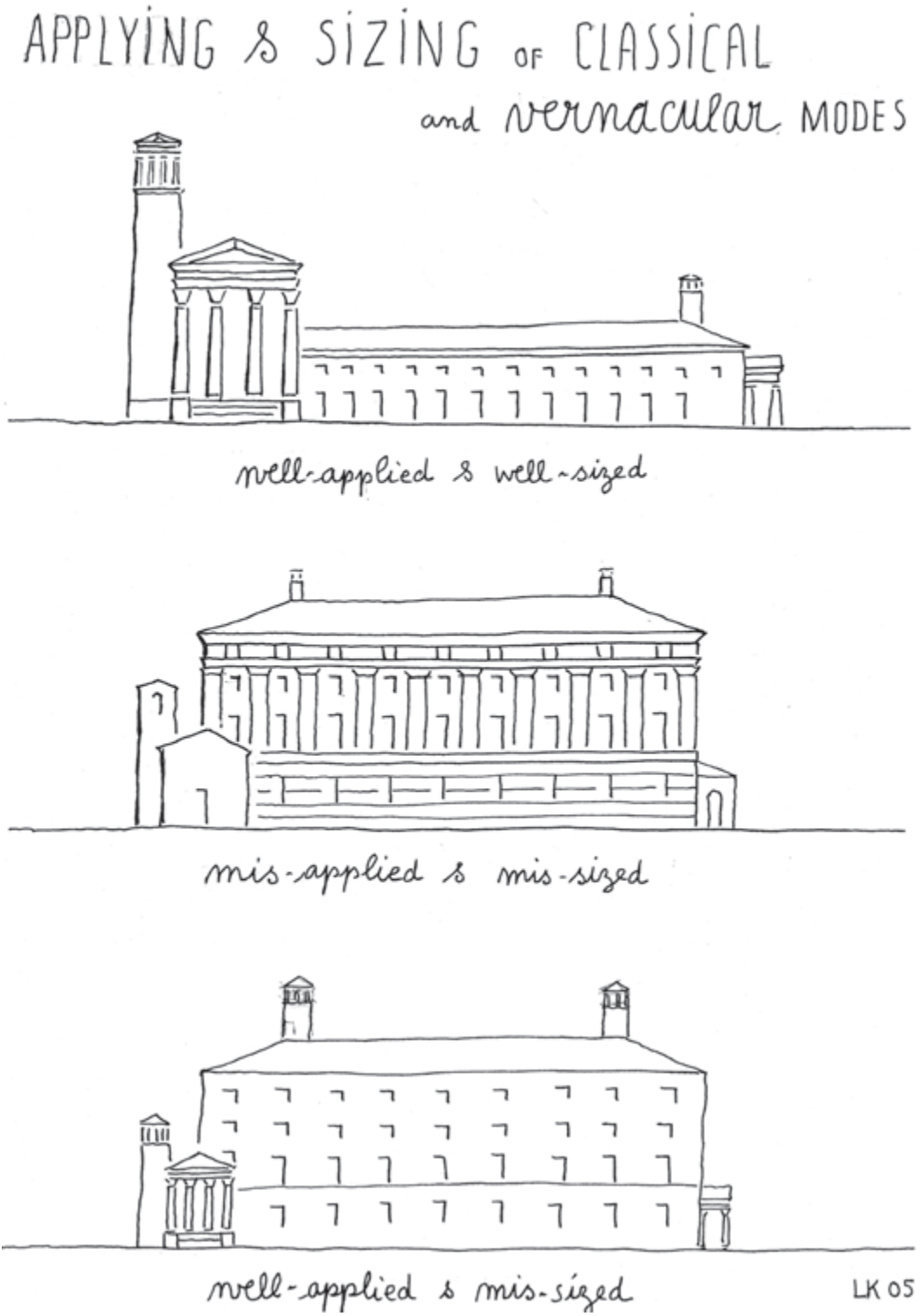
BUROCRATIC O R D E R

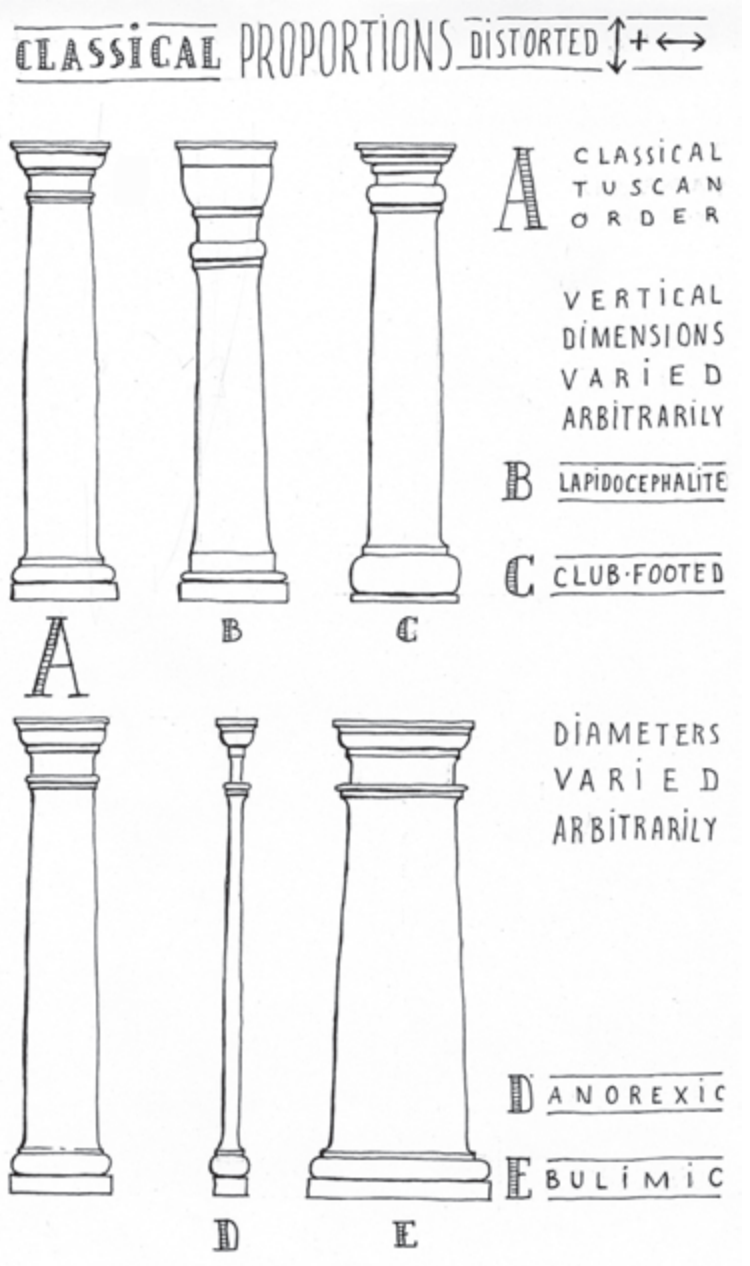
FUNCTIONAL VARIETY >< ARCHITECTURAL UNIFORMITY



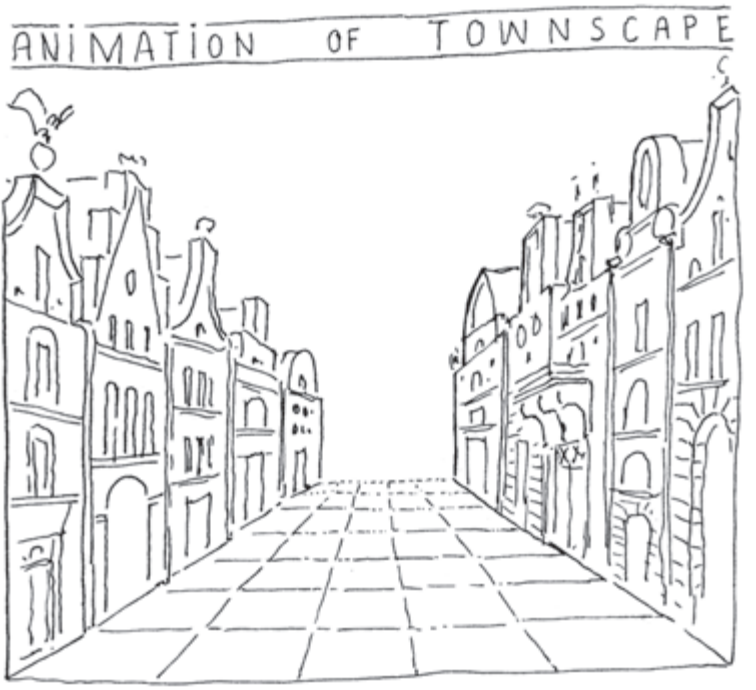
OVER DEVELOPMENT - MANHATTANISM

FUNCTIONAL VARIETY >< ARCHITECTURAL VARIETY


APPLYING & SIZING OF CLASSICAL
and vernacular MODES
well-applied & well-sized
mis-applied & mis-sized
well-applied & mis-sized
LK 05

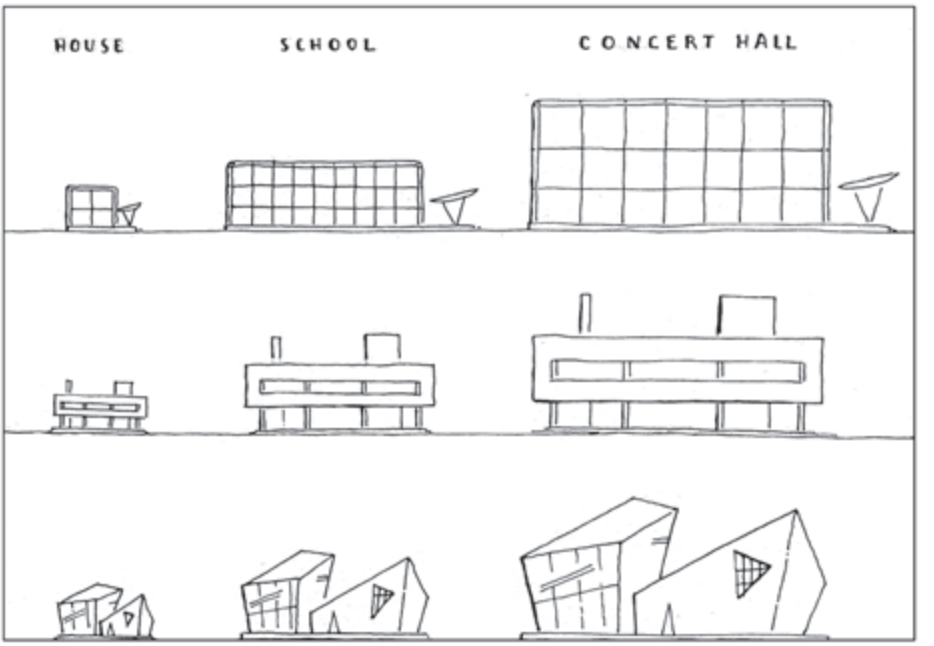


The notion of the classical can best be personally experienced and integrated through hands-on experiences. Inspired by the tuning methods of musical instruments, of finding the beautiful tone through the tightening and release of a string's tension, I ask students to graphically distort an object of their choice either horizontally or vertically. The visual pain and relief thus experienced are analogous to the auditory sensation caused by tuning.



ANIMATED FACADES
POOR PAVING
L.K. 87

POOR FACADES
ANIMATED PAVING



Classical monumentality results from the physical and metaphysical enlargement of vernacular models. Modernist monumentality is effected by a mere physical blowup, without artistic translation of structure or detail.

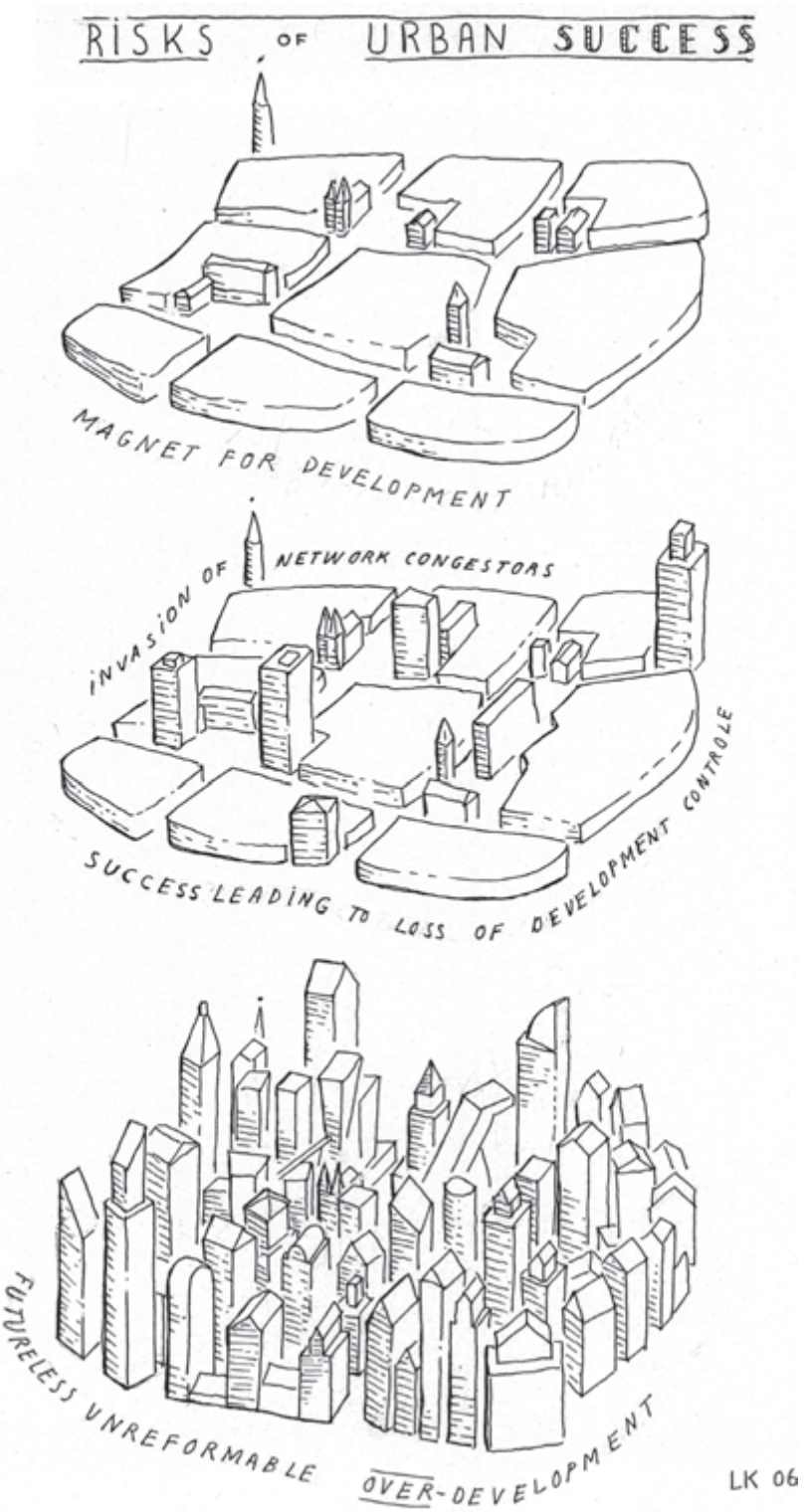
Traditional architectural canons are conditioned by the exclusive structural use of natural materials.

Modernist formalism instead is only possible through the structural capacities of synthetic materials, ferro-concrete, steel, glues, etc. It never developed a classical apparatus, a transformative rhetoric of construction.

Its vernacular nature may explain why it is so ill fitting for Euclidean urban patterns and why its effects are less deadening in vernacular geometric settings.

Cautionary "Tail"

Beauty of structure, composition, and detail commonly inspires admiration and respect. It also awakens jealousy and envy. Beautiful and successful places become magnets of such power that unless protected they call upon themselves the forces of their own destruction. Great cities that do not legislate against over-development are condemned to short and violent life spans.


RISKS OF URBAN SUCCESS
MAGNET FOR DEVELOPMENT
INVASION OF NETWORK CONGESTORS
SUCCESS LEADING TO LOSS OF DEVELOPMENT CONTROLE
FUTURELESS UNREFORMABLE OVER-DEVELOPMENT
LK 06

PAPER TIGER, PAINTING BY CARL LUBIN, 2002

CHAPTER X

DRAWING TO REALITY

WHY I PRACTICE
CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE AND TRADITIONAL URBANISM

SCULPTURE PODIUM, BARCELONA, SPAIN

TOWER BLOCK RENOVATION, ALESSANDRIA, ITALY

ARCHEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, SINTRA, PORTUGAL

THE SEASIDE PRIZE

ROBERT DAVIS LAUDATIO

KRIER HOUSE, SEASIDE, FLORIDA, USA

CITTÁ NUOVA, ALESSANDRIA, ITALY

WINDSOR VILLAGE HALL, VERO BEACH, FLORIDA, USA

BRASSERIE AGAPE, VAL D'EUROPE, FRANCE

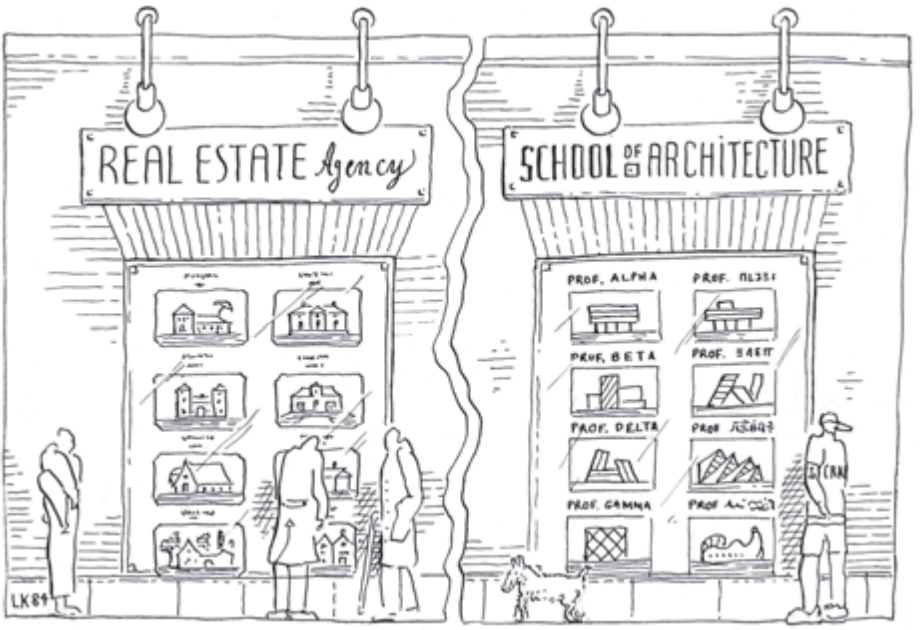
THE JORGE M. PEREZ ARCHITECTURE CENTER,
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI, CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA, USA

THE RICHARD H. DRIEHAUS PRIZE
FOR CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE

JAQUE ROBERTSON LAUDATIO

HAMEAU-DES-PINS, HARDELOT, FRANCE

POUNDBURY, DORCHESTER, DORSET, UK



THE ARCHITECT'S CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE

BUILD IN SUCH A WAY THAT THE CONCEPT OF YOUR DESIGN IS VALID AS A PRINCIPLE OF BOTH ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM.

BUILD IN SUCH A WAY THAT YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES CAN FIND PLEASURE AT ANY TIME IN USING YOUR BUILDINGS, LOOKING AT THEM, LIVING, WORKING, HOLIDAYING, AND GROWING OLD IN THEM.

Freely interpreted from Immanuel Kant

WHY I PRACTICE CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE AND TRADITIONAL URBANISM

I grew up in an environment that, despite two recent world wars, was unblemished by modernist architecture and planning. Until the mid-1960s, Luxembourg was a miracle of traditional architecture, a small capital city of 70,000 souls, embedded in manicured agricultural and horticultural landscapes and lofty beach forests. We lived on a tree-lined cornice, overlooking a deep valley and one of the most accomplished townscapes in Europe. My father's tailoring workshop occupied the ground floor of the townhouse, and for my primary education I hopped across the street when hearing the school bells chime from our garden. I had most of my secondary education in the baroque abbey of Echternach, a small medieval town, which together with its four-towered Romanesque Basilica had in less than ten years been beautifully reconstructed in a 100 percent artisanal way after a near total destruction during the 1944 Rundstedt offensive.

My mother's piano playing filled the house, and during holidays my parents took us four children to Switzerland, France, and Italy to visit places of beauty. Neighboring Germany was avoided for obvious reasons and in front of the Jungfrau, the panorama of Florence, or the lakefront of Lugano, we all experienced an aesthetic communion of awe and admiration. The family concord shattered with a bang when for once I had chosen a destination and taken my parents in the summer of 1963 to see Le Corbusier's Cité Radieuse. Though I didn't realize it immediately, my life's orientation became defined by that visit.

Until then, I had, via my brother, become acquainted with modernism merely through books of Le Corbusier, Giedion, and Gropius. The formidable promise expressed there had swollen my sails. In a Sunday High Mass, our parish priest had spoken of Ronchamp as the "ship of concrete, which had given body to our religion of love and hope," no less.

Le Corbusier had become for me a second messiah and as a result, I imagined modernist architecture to be something superior to all the beautiful buildings I had seen and grown up with so far. I fantasized of white Cubist volumes adorning my favorite places and mile-long inhabited walls, ploughing across Luxembourg's historic city center, bridging its valley and digging into its forested hillsides; radiant visions of an unearthly splendor. Before the ill-fated visit we camped in an uncle's olive grove in the Provence, enjoying perfectly intact beaches, towns, and landscapes. The timeless perfection of a nearby Cistercian monastery, the picturesque charm of the surrounding farms and hill towns, and not least our bloated expectations for the impending Marseille visit had indeed ill-prepared us for the tawdry reality of the Cité Radieuse. We were all speechless with shock,

wondering at first whether we were at the right address. Nobody, including myself, could quite believe that this was what I had been eulogizing for years.

Next thing, and for weeks and months, trying desperately to overcome my unavowable disappointment, I found myself for the first time in my life justifying to my parents something I profoundly felt to be socially unacceptable and aesthetically inferior to all we had commonly admired so far. The relentless devastation of Luxembourg, which started in full a few years later, not only alienated me from modernism, but from the intellectual homeland in which I had sought temporary refuge from a provincial upbringing.

It was this double exile, which paradoxically opened my eyes, that gave sense and direction to my life. The rape of my beloved childhood places became for me what genocide is for a persecuted people – a life-threatening menace. I took it totally personally and decided to fight back, not clearly knowing who the enemy was.

My resources being very limited, I had to calculate from early on how to spend them. Unable to find a master, a school, or a doctrine that could teach me how to stop the holocaust and learn my craft, I felt I had no choice but to learn from buildings, towns, and landscapes that I and my family had experienced and loved. I decided to abandon university, not to have kids, not to engage in building, but rather to think, to draw, and to generally find out what was so wrong with contemporary architecture and urbanism and how to right it . . . not because I felt I had a special gift in that direction, but because of an absurd realization that nobody else, not even those I most esteemed, seemed inclined to do what I imperatively felt had to be done.

It soon dawned on me that the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, which in its pessimistic and utopian forms so enchanted my generation, offered only consolatory delusions. It was not a cure but part of a near all-engulfing confusion. Instead, the incredibly fast and beautiful traditional reconstruction of Luxembourg's war-ravaged small towns, villages, and farms, which I had witnessed as a child, became for me, on reflection, a model of civilized and generally accepted modernity.

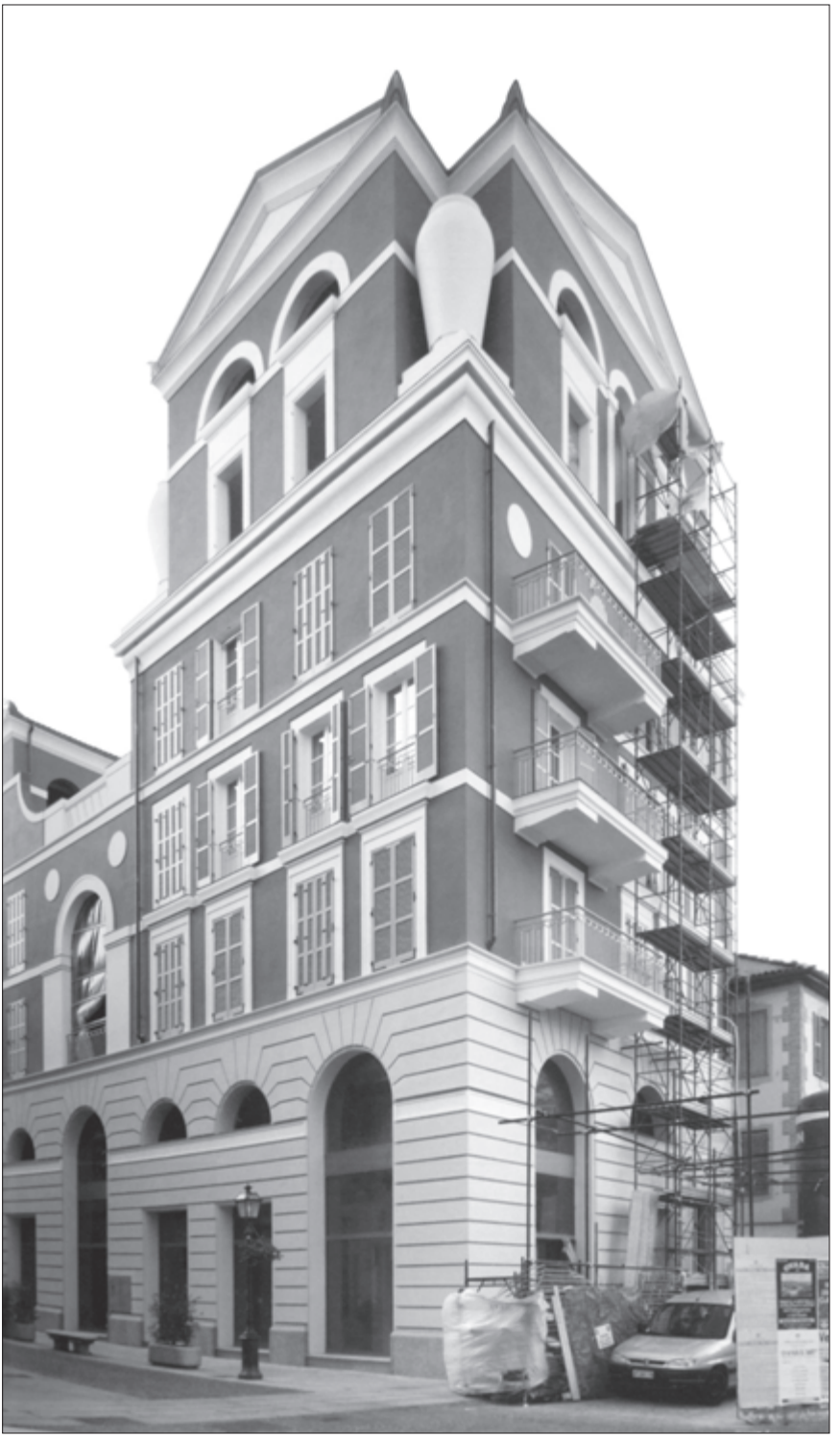
Indeed the various brands of postmodernism, which the critical theory of the Frankfurt School continues to inspire, are but futile attempts to escape from the debilitating tenets of modernism itself. Their experimentalism condemns them to very short life spans, to technological and cultural irrelevance, to broad social rejection. Not only have they proved incapable of replacing the technological and artistic heritage of traditional urbanism and classical architecture, but the colossal human cost of these failed experiments seems to me mostly but sterile

diversions from an inevitable return to common sense. Furthermore, how can the modernist and postmodernist errant ways be redeemed by a cult and culture of masterworks when the masters themselves lack technical mastery, artistic maturity, and more profoundly, philosophy?

To me the worst consequences of modernism lie not only in the worldwide degeneration of the general building activity through the loss of traditional building skills, but more tragically in the intellectual corruption of their forms of transmission and theoretical foundations. Modernism's historicization of traditional architectures, i.e., the ideologically motivated reduction of a timeless building technology to a mere collection of obsolete styles and crafts, has blinded several generations to the continuing modernity and irreplaceable value of classical architecture and traditional practices. That is why I am not primarily interested in the history of traditional architectures and urbanisms but in their technology, in their modern practice.

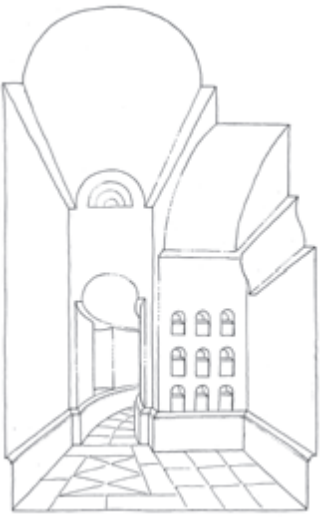
The question of modernity can therefore no longer be one of period and style but one of persistent utility and quality. Practicing traditional architecture today is then not a refuge in past styles or history, but a return to mature and experienced forms of environment building and management.

PAPASEIT MONUMENT: LÉON KRIER'S PODIUMS FOR ROB KRIER SCULPTURES, PORT FRONT AND PROMENADE, BARCELONA, 1990.

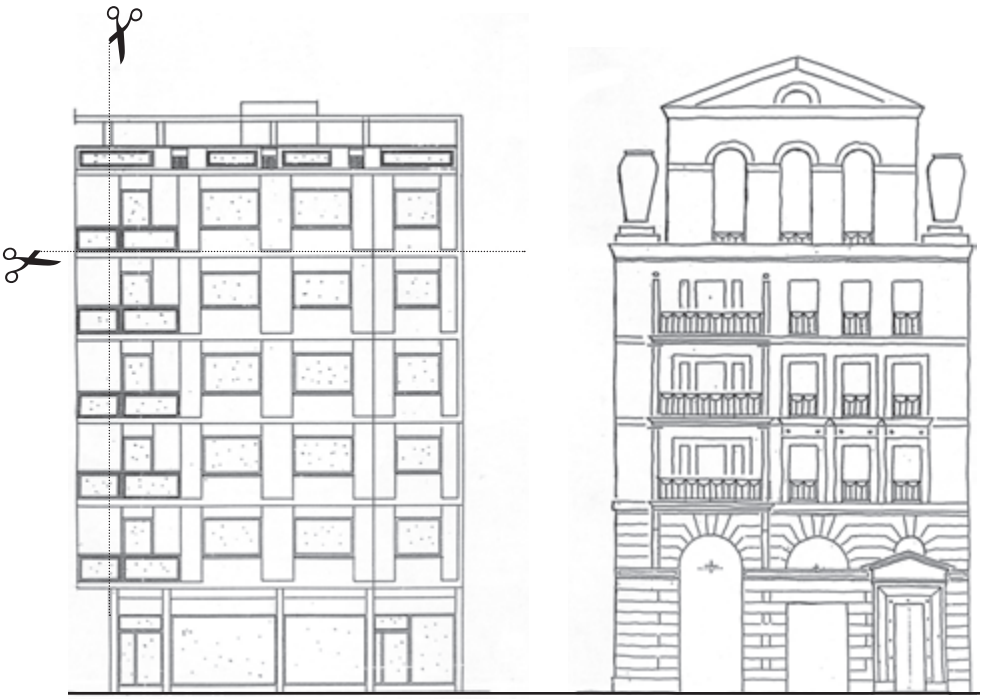


TOWER BLOCK RENOVATION
ALESSANDRIA, ITALY
1998 – 2001

Piazza Marconi forms the western entrance gate into the historic center of Alessandria, Italy. It has been disfigured for 30 years by a poorly designed modernist tower block. We were obliged by municipal regulations to maintain the concrete skeleton and stairs of the tower block, while totally rebuilding its exterior and reorganizing the interiors. The strictures of site and structure led us to make a fairly relaxed use of traditional elements. The ground floor and mezzanine are occupied by a bank, with apartments on the upper floors. The hanging gardens on the third and fifth floors help articulate the transition between the three- and five-storey-high neighbors and the seven-story-high corner tower. The tripartite division into base, middle, and roof pavilion integrate, this high building with the familiar scale of Alessandria's historic center.



Entrance Lobby and Mailboxes



Opposite: Palazzo Marconi during construction. Lower Left: Original elevation. Lower Right: Renovated elevation.

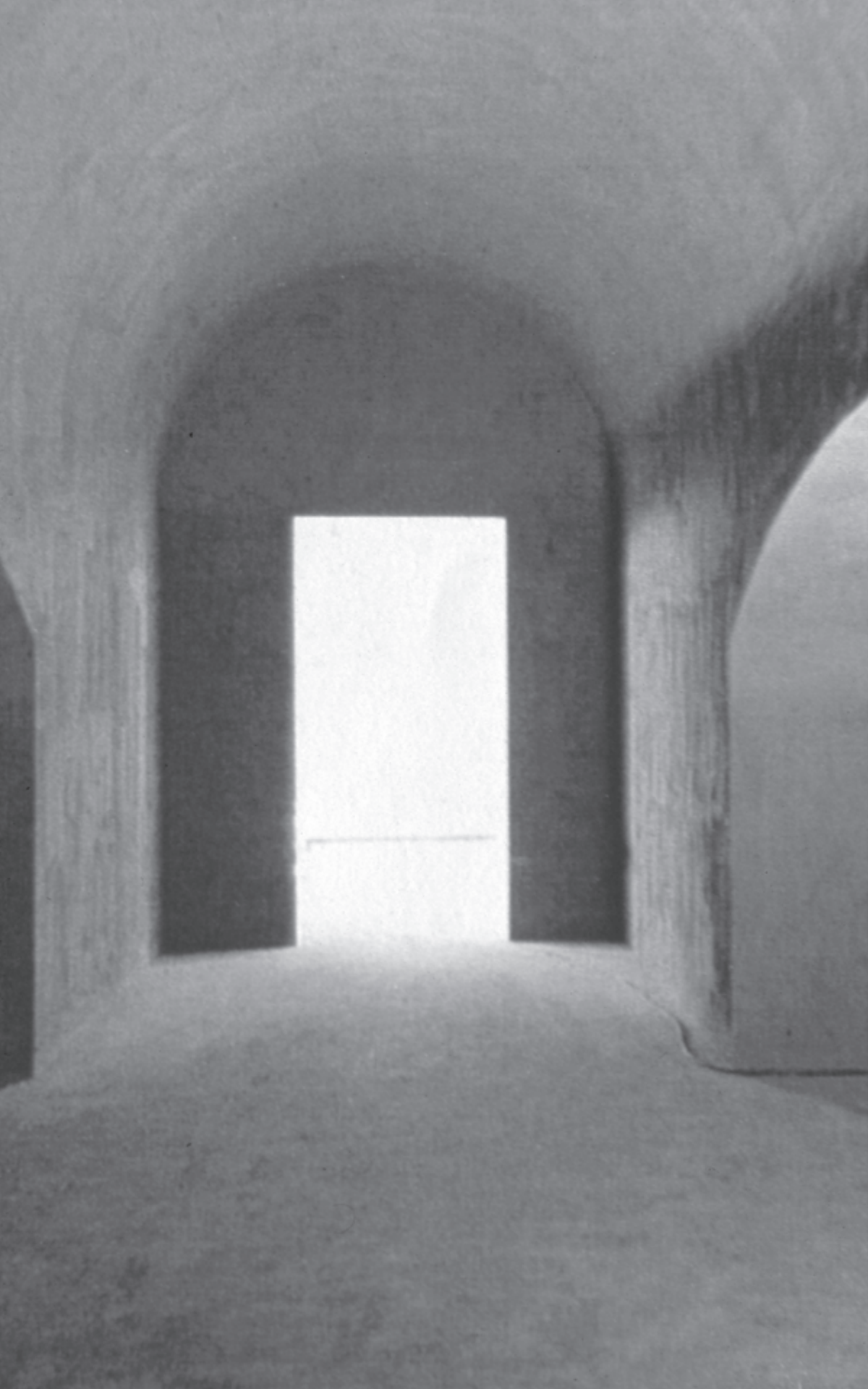
MASMO-SINTRA
MUSEU ARCHEOLÓGICO SÁO MIGUEL DE ODRINHAS
SINTRA, PORTUGAL, 1992 – 1997

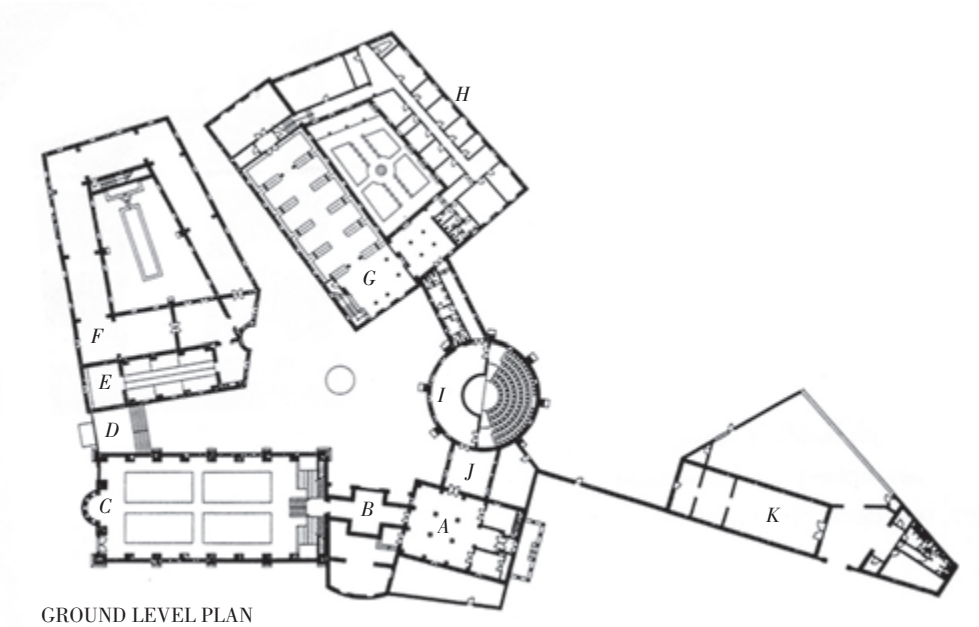
Instead of forming a single and isolated building, the Museu Archeológico Sáo Miguel de Odrinhas (MASMO) is organized into a multiplicity of pavilions, streets, and squares with the old church of Sáo Miguel at the center. The sketch masterplan illustrates how future streets can radiate deep into the surrounding neighborhoods and effectively become the geometric and symbolic focus of the entire municipality of Odrinhas. For this vision to become concrete reality, suburban-type setbacks in the existing guidelines, which now dictate the position of buildings on plots, will be changed to mandate that at least one side of the building be built on the street frontage.

Recent building activity around Odrinhas is of a suburban nature. The new MASMO demonstrates that even with a modest budget, modern development can create harmonious, efficient, and desirable results.

LÉON KRIER IN COLLABORATION WITH JOSE CARDIN, DIRECTOR OF ARCHAEOLOGY, ALBERTO NUNES, AND ANTONIO BRAGA, ARCHITECTS

MVSEV
ARQVEOLÓGICO
DE
SÃO MIGVEL
DE
ODRINHAS

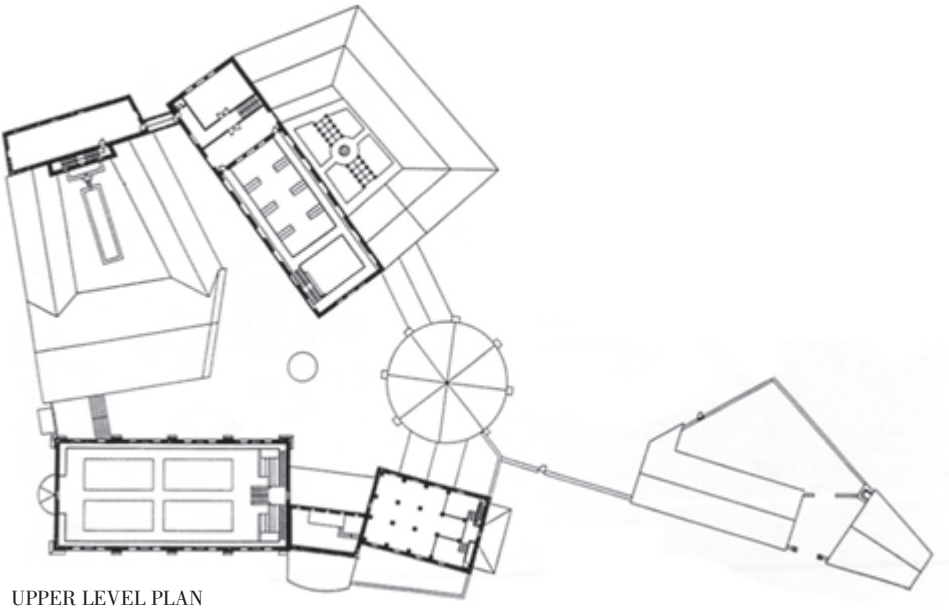




GROUND LEVEL PLAN

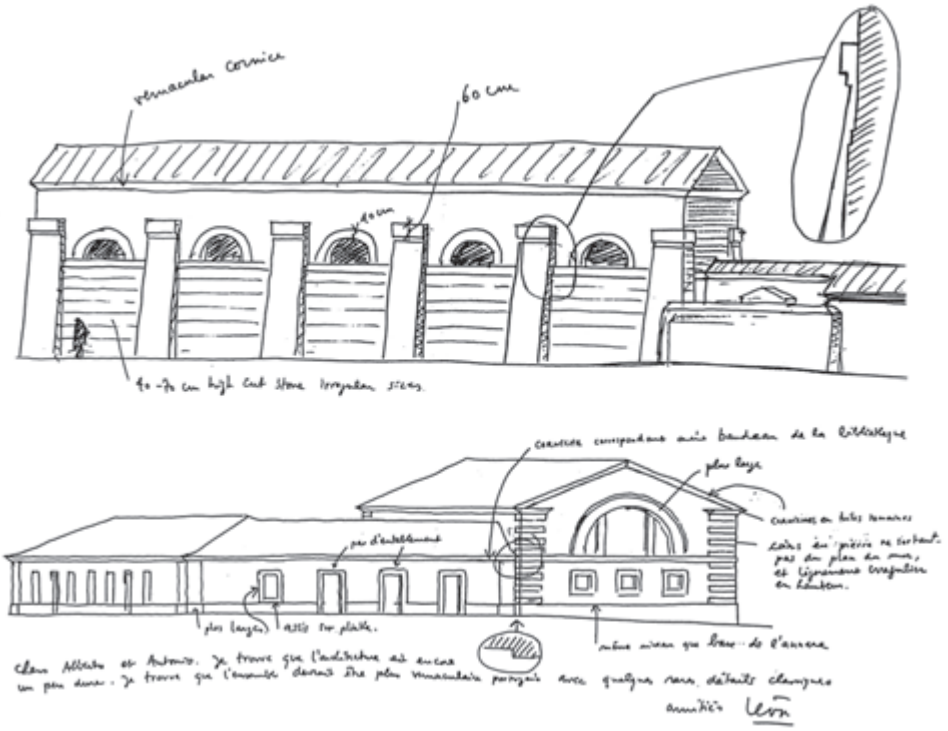
LEGEND

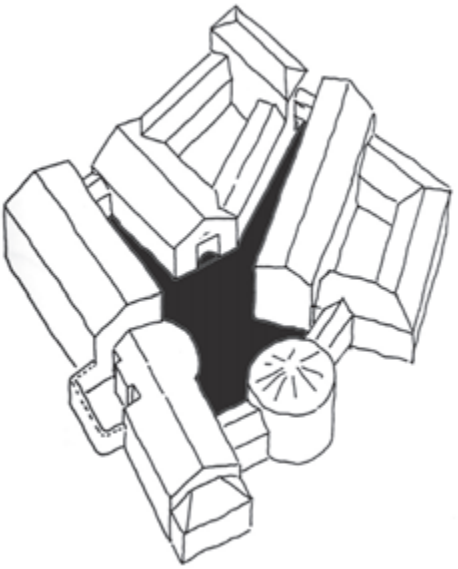
A. ENTRANCE & TEMPORARY EXHIBITS
B. ETRUSCAN CRYPT
C. ROMAN BASILICA
D. VISIGOTHIC CHURCH
E. CRONOS DEVORATOR MEDIEVAL NECROPOLIS
F. OTIUM FECUNDUM
G. LIBRARY
H. ADMINISTRATION & LABORATORY
I. AUDITORIUM
J. CAFE
K. RESTORATION



UPPER LEVEL PLAN

MVSEV
O LIVRO DE PEDRA


vernacular cornice
60 cm
40 cm
40-70 cm high cut stone irregular sizes
plus large
pas d'entablement
plus (larger)
assis sur plinthe.
même niveau que base de l'annexe
Chers Alberto et Antonio. Je trouve que l'architecture est encore un peu dure. Je trouve que l'ensemble devrait être plus vernaculaire portugais avec quelques rares détails classiques
amitiés Leon



The low-cost budget required that architectural detailing be kept to a minimum establishing a hierarchy of buildings and public spaces, the core of the future city of Sao Miguel de Odrinhas.

Since 2004 Léon Krier has been leading a planning team responsible for drafting the planning principles and architectural codes for the largest section of Sintra's World Heritage site. Indeed, the ideas put forth to combat the regional sprawl are championed by the Mayor, Dr. Fernando Seara, and UNESCO's examining commission. The documents linger in the drawers of an administration that refuses outside interference with their well-oiled modus operandi. Neither are they impressed by UNESCO's threat of eviction from "World Heritage" status.

THE SEASIDE PRIZE

The Seaside Prize is awarded annually to individuals or organizations that have made significant contributions to the quality and character of communities.

Recipients of the Seaside Prize include Léon Krier; the six founders of the Congress for the New Urbanism; historian and scholar Vincent Scully; writer and civic activist Jane Jacobs; Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr., of Charleston; Seaside Town Founders Daryl and Robert Davis; architects Alex Cooper and Jaque Robertson; Aldo Rossi; Witold Rybczynski; Robert A.M. Stern; and James Howard Kunstler. The recipients of the prize have had a major influence on how our towns and cities can best be built and rebuilt to reflect and promote: diversity, walkability, beauty, and sustainability. Seaside Prize recipients are considered the leaders of contemporary urban development and education. The Seaside Prize key and the medal commemorating the 20th Anniversary of Seaside was designed by Dhiru Thadani.

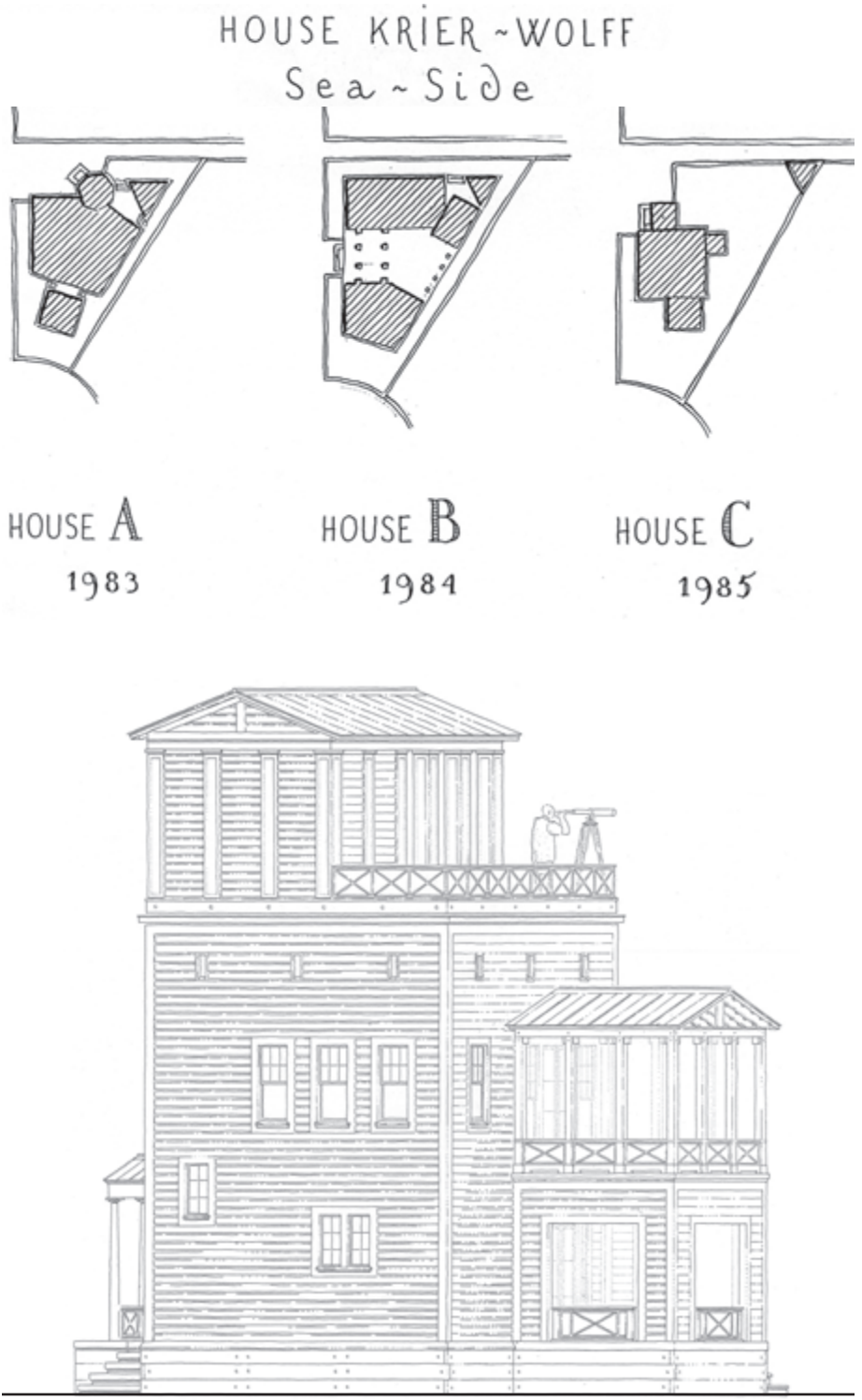
ROBERT DAVIS LAUDATIO

The story of a success is always also the story of a failure. An artist is not a "being" but a "becoming" matter. Robert is who he is, does what he does, because, deeply, he cannot believe in his own worth; needs others to believe in himself first: that is why artists have to jump farther, play faster or more delicately, build bigger and higher; make more money, eat sublimely or starve with more conviction, suffer with more publicity than common mortals. They have to win over and charm everybody because even one single skeptic is enough to fuel or rekindle their own disbelief in themselves, in their beauty, in their intelligence or talent. And as there is always a skeptic left somewhere, there is no peace in this life. Maybe even eternal life was invented so that there should be no peace thinkable. But there are consolations for this sore existential frailties (which Robert embodies) – there is work, love, friendship, and prizes.

Robert Davis became a town founder at a time when towns were no longer founded, when the ground was everywhere broken without ceremony, traces erased without deference or regret.

Robert established markets in a "forum" where people came not to grab things from shelves and hurry away, but to stroll and chat and wonder. He is a man who does not meet congratulations with a thanks, but with a nervous cough, maybe with a "we are trying." When you see the pictures of little Robert and his sister Laurie planted on the beach blinking against the sun, frail and delicate, then, frail and delicate now (bearded) he is not the born winner, the born mover of mountains, and yet that is what he set out to do and achieved, dear little Robert. He is of course an artist and as all true artists is always a failed artist, a failed vocation. What he truly wanted to be and become was not a developer, only, but more, much more. The artist does what he does because it's the only thing he can do, and without it he would not exist. He doesn't allow himself to be loved for what he is but what he feels he should be. The true winner doesn't need to win, he rests satisfied in himself. Robert is not a satisfied, happy man, he cannot rest on his laurels; he cannot; and that is why we admire him and celebrate him. He does many things to perfection, he invites the world to witness his achievements, foundations, towns, products, ideas; but to what avail? He cannot be quite satisfied, because the world for him cannot be that happy ending. That's the way it is and any amount of betterment, reformation will not change that fate.

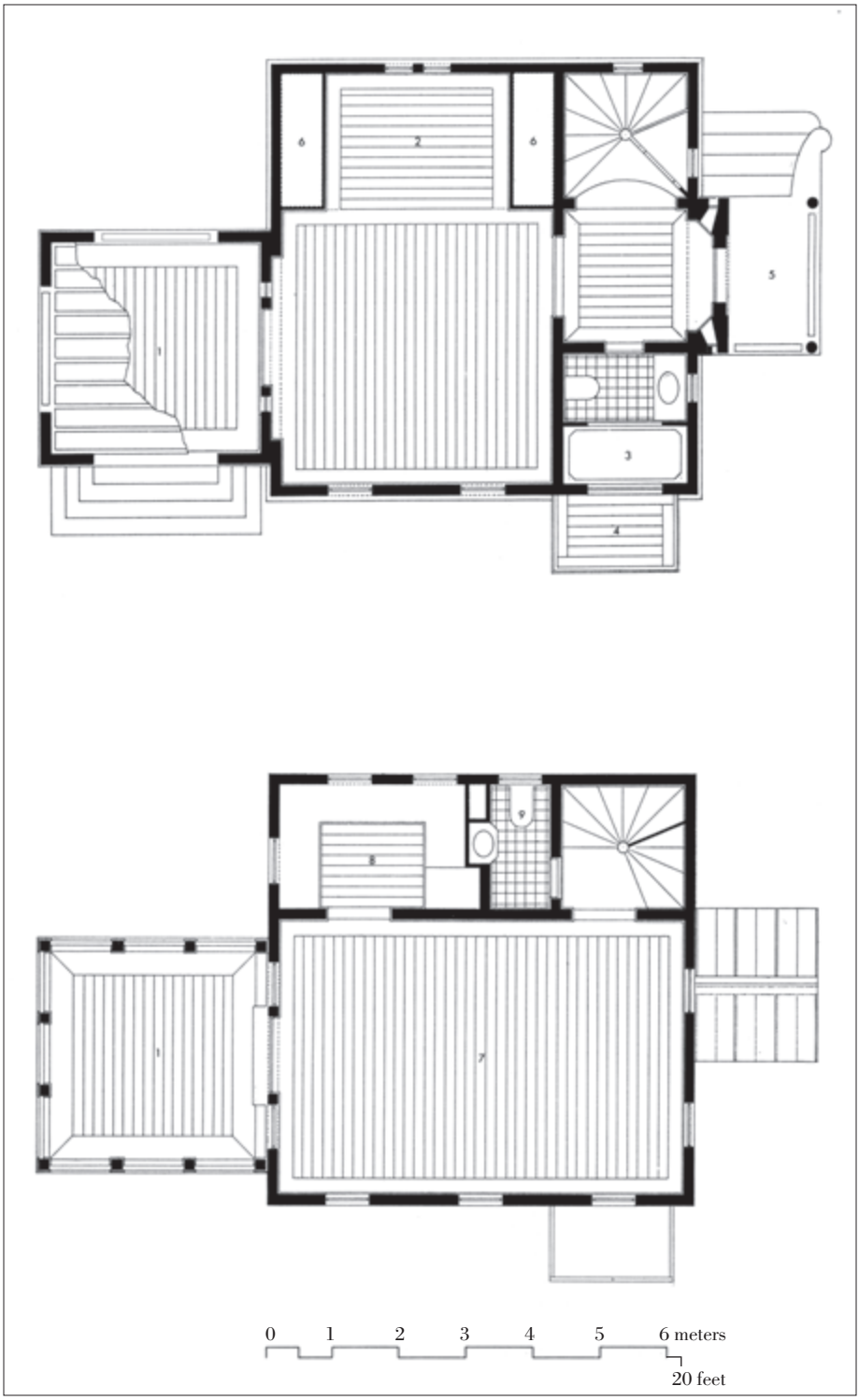
Robert is a perfectionist and yet Seaside is engineered, planned, managed, to be forever imperfect because perfection and purity are a form of death, no place for the truly living. He and his people have known the consequences of too much of it. Imperfection, impure, unfinished, because it is that incompleteness which ultimately allows us to dream of a better Seaside, to forever dream and envision a more perfect future.

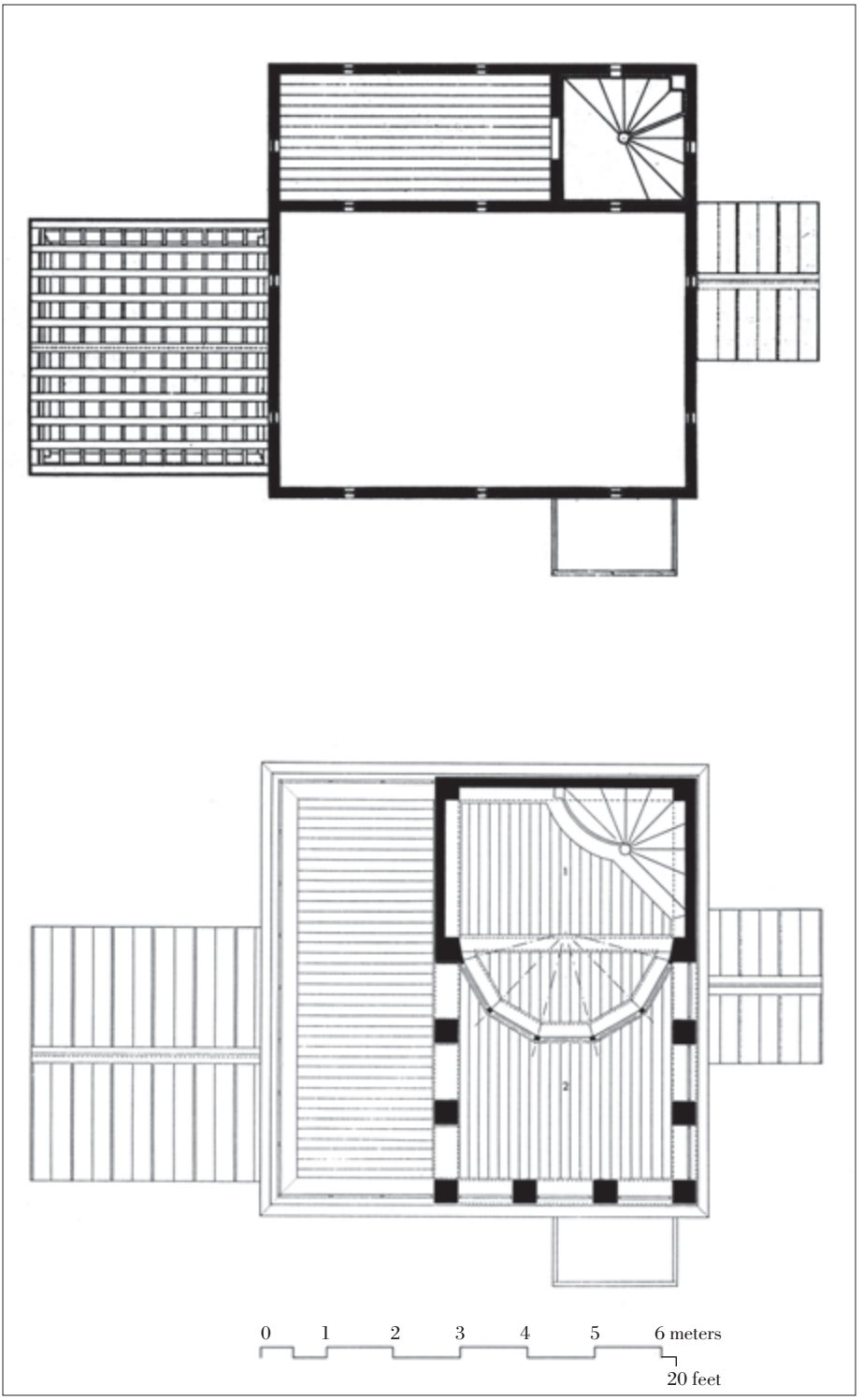

HOUSE KRIER ~ WOLFF
Sea ~ Side
HOUSE A
1983
HOUSE B
1984
HOUSE C
1985

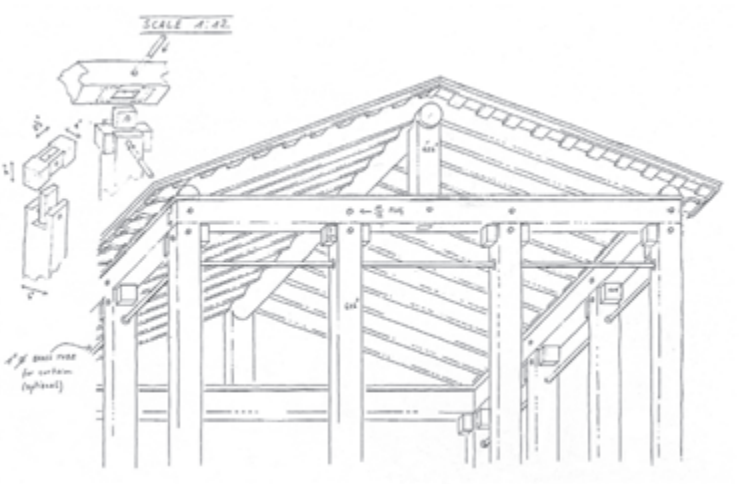
KRIER HOUSE
SEASIDE, FLORIDA

The Krier House forms a gate house to the northeastern entrance of the town. It is a prominent building situated on the highest point of Seaside and commanding splendid views of the resort and the ocean. It is a small house with large rooms.

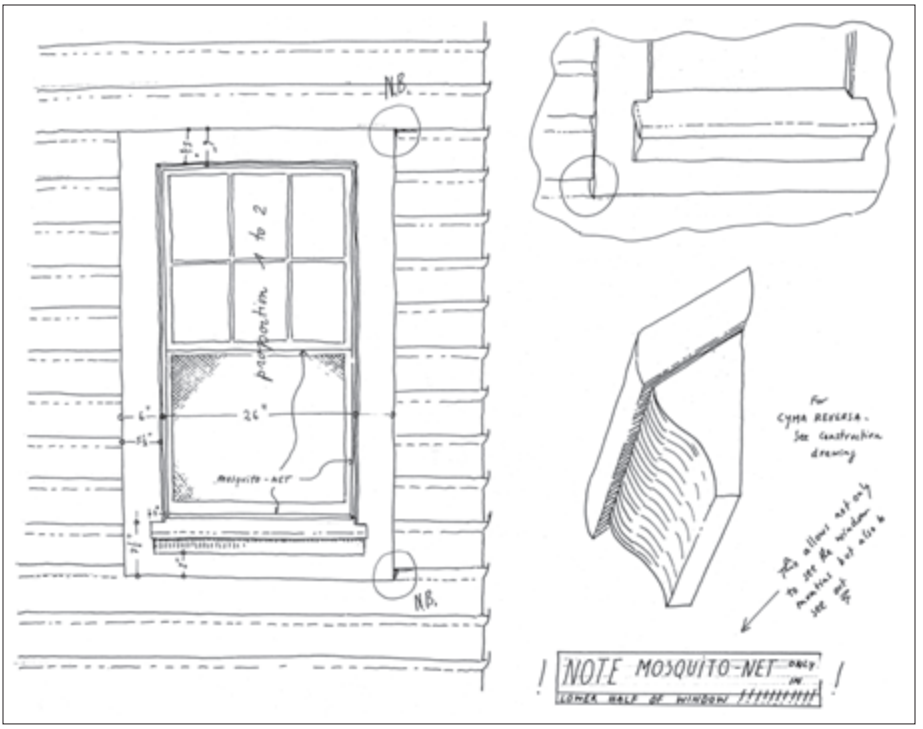
The bedroom, on the ground floor, is oriented toward the intimate garden shaded by dense evergreen oaks. The great room on the first floor measures 6.20 x 4.10 x 4.10 meters and has views to the east, south, and west. The kitchen and staircase occupy the northern side. The main volume of the house measure 6.40 x 6.40 x 9.10 meters. Compositionally this acts as a central block, onto which are appended more transparent aedicula: on the east the entrance porch; on the south the shower room; on the west the loggias; and on the roof the library folly. The proportions of the volumes, bays, windows, and spaces are all dictated by simple numerical rations: 1:2, 1:3, 2:3, etc.


6
2
6
5
1
3
4
9
8
1
7
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 meters
20 feet


1
2
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 meters
20 feet



The library deck is the highest elevation in town. The Seaside code permits any occupyable space less than 225 square feet to rise without a height limitation, resulting in great number of belvederes to make up the characteristic skyline.


NB.
partition 1 to 2
26"
Mosquito-net
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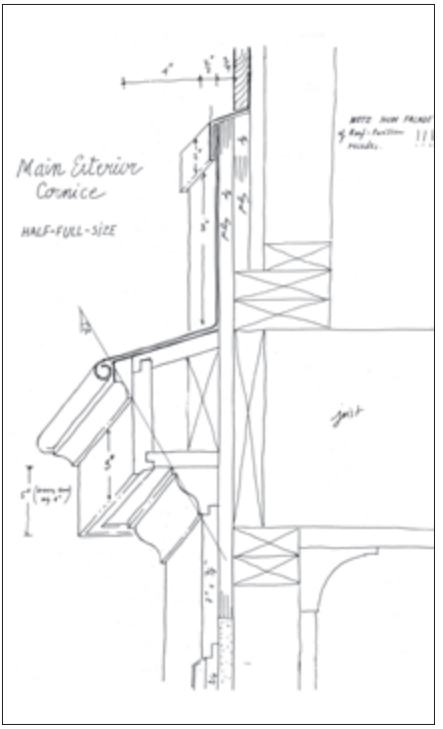
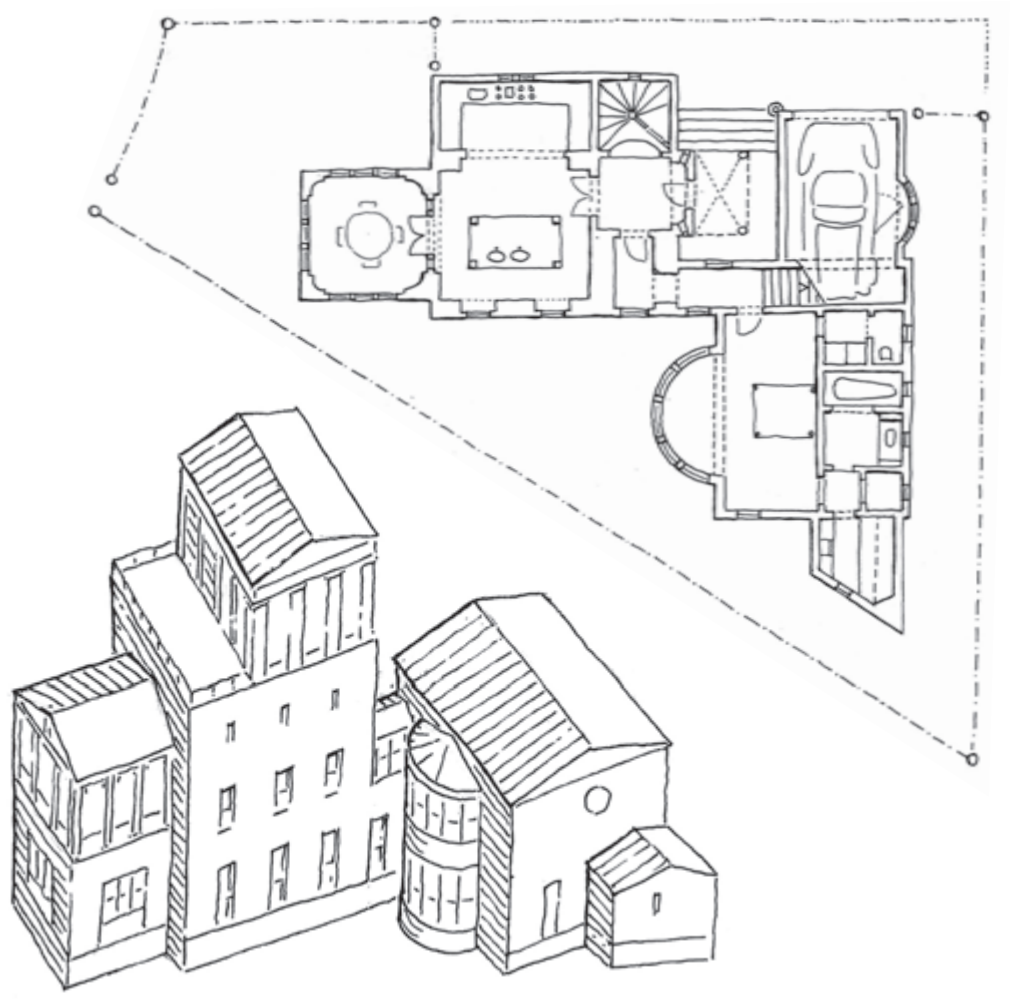
For
CYMA REVERSA -
See Construction
drawing
NOTE MOSQUITO-NET
LOWER HALF OF WINDOW

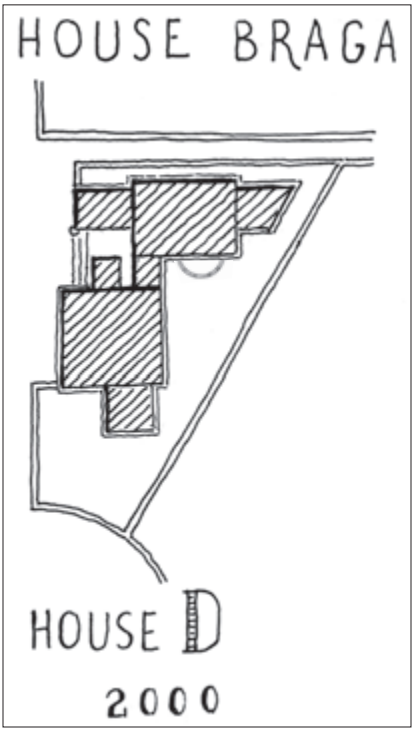
Bedroom - window (no scale)

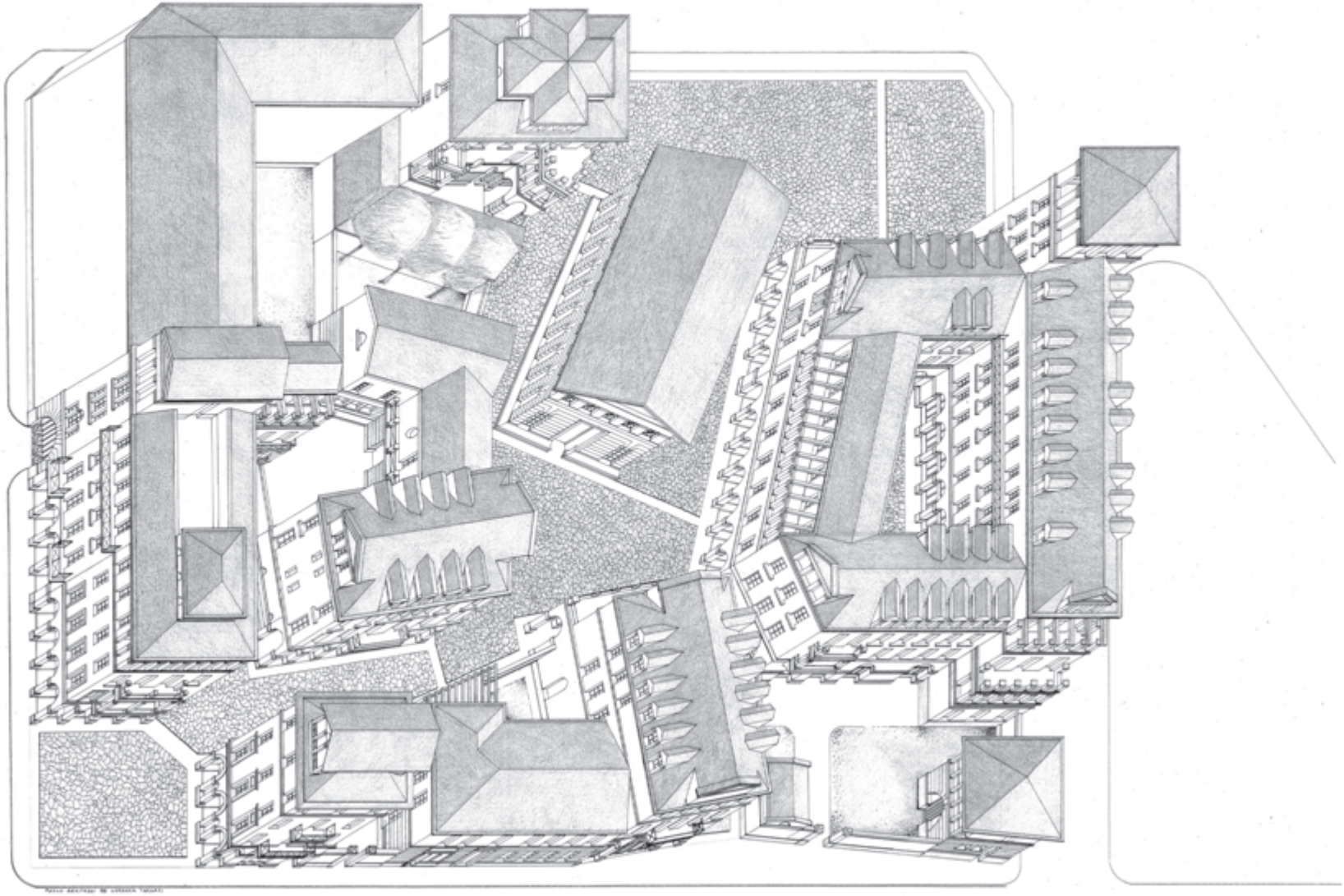

Main Exterior
Cornice
HALF-FULL-SIZE
joist

KRIER HOUSE, SEASIDE, FLORIDA, Photographed by Alex MacLean, Landslides Aerial Photography in January 1994 (above) and March 2007 (below). The original one-bedroom house was expanded with an addition in 2003 seen in the photograph below and opposite page. The addition added a bedroom, study, and garage. Originally painted magnolia white the house was repainted after the addition was complete to the intended terra-cotta red. During the remodeling the new owners Joseph and Laurie Braga painstakingly rebuilt the house to reflect the original design details and mouldings, diligently fixing the mistakes made by the original contractor.

Left: South elevation of original house, 1985. Middle: First floor plan of Braga House. Bottom: Axonometric of Braga House, 2000.




HOUSE BRAGA
HOUSE D
2000



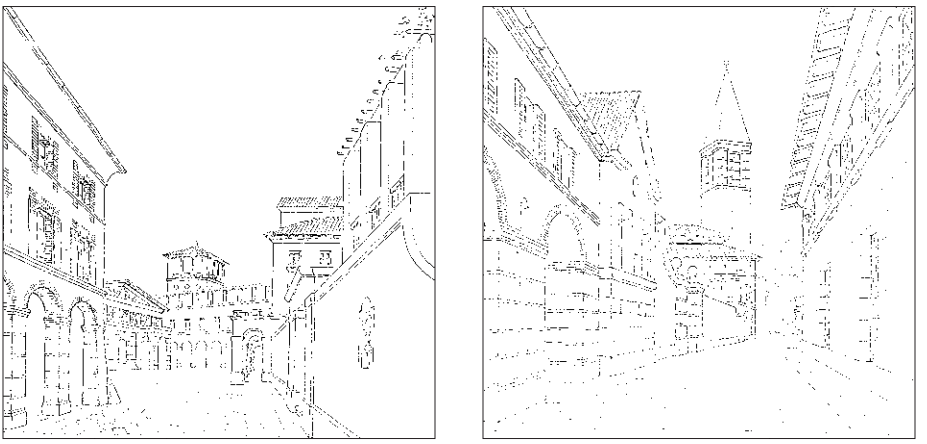
CITTÁ NUOVA
ALESSANDRIA, ITALY

The Cittá Nuova Project is the redevelopment of the 2.5 acre lot of the former Olva Factory in Alessandria, Italy. The key urban design concept was to create a significant and central urban square in the Pista-quarter of this piedmont provincial capital to integrate the existing Church of Madonna del Suffragio into the composition and enhance its importance and visibility by the construction of a campanile.

The program includes 2,500 m^2 of paved public spaces, 6,000 m^2 of residential units, 2,000 m^2 of offices, 1,000 m^2 of shops, 500 m^2 of bank buildings, and 300 underground parking spaces. The seven separate buildings are a maximum of seven stories high and form four separate small building blocks within the 100 x 100 meter urban block order of Alessandria.

The Pista District was developed in the early twentieth century by medium- and large-sized industries and warehouses interspersed among residential blocks, never quite maturing into a full urban district. Its geographic center is formed by a wide avenue lined by 100 meter long residential blocks and only relieved by the gable of the parish church. Many of the industrial uses are now leaving the area.

The Cittá Nuova project is not merely a normal residential redevelopment of a typical 100 x 100 meter block but provides the district at long last with the missing central piazza, a symbolic, functional, and social urban center. The four new building blocks create a variety of highly characteristic public spaces in consonance with the existing surroundings. Their positioning and contours are generally not linear or rectangular in plan. The irregular shapes of the resulting



BORGO CITTÀ NUOVA, ALESSANDRIA, ITALY, L.K. AND GABRIELE TAGLIAVENTI, 1995–2002.

streets and squares contrast agreeably with the uniformity of Alessandria's gridiron plan. They offer myriad well-shaped geometric surprises. The bank building is the focus of the main square and is, despite its small size, characterized by a monumental composition. The "hors echelle" of its architectural elements and details are akin to its function of treasure house. The seven new streets and squares, which cut diagonally through the 100 x 100 meter block, are lined by arcades and commercial premises ranging between 50 m^2 and 250 m^2.

IL FRUTTETO
DEL BORGO

The building masses of varying shapes and heights are interrupted by walled gardens and courtyards, and the resulting small building blocks, made of a variety of apartment types, are oriented generally in three cardinal directions, offering interesting views and ensuring the good natural lighting and ventilation of their rooms.

The upper floors of most buildings are crowned by open loggias, pergolas, sun decks, and belvederes. The ramps to the underground garages are integrated into the building masses or covered by open-trussed roofs. Immediately after entering the buildings the ramps make a sharp turn, preventing the bypassers from viewing the bowels of the garage. The scale, character, and proportions of the building types and their architectural elements are those that are typical of the provincial piedmont capitals. They are neither of a high classical nor a country vernacular, but of an unpretentious urban style and manner.

Below Left: Existing Conditions 1995. Below Right: Proposed Citta Nuova Development creating new Piazza IV Novembre. The proposed campanile for the Parrish Church was refused by the priest in favor of a car park.

THIS DEVELOPMENT IS A MONUMENT TO THE COURAGE OF GABRIELE SAGGINI, THE DIRECTOR OF SIVIM. DESPITE ITS SUCCESS THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATION HAS ACTIVELY BLOCKED MORE RECENT PROJECTS OF SIMILAR CHARACTER AND STYLE BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

BAR
BAR
BAR

WINDSOR VILLAGE HALL
VERO BEACH, FLORIDA

Occupying the focal point of the major vistas and avenues and flanking a public square, Windsor Village Hall is both a meeting hall and a symbol for the new community of Windsor – at once its profane and sacred heart.

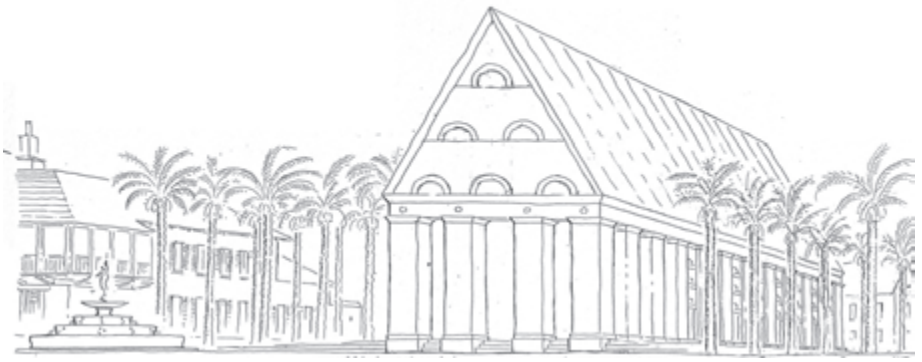
Rising on a podium, the thirty white pillars carry the steep gable well above the roof lines of the town center, houses, and walled gardens, forming a highly visible architectural and urban magnet.

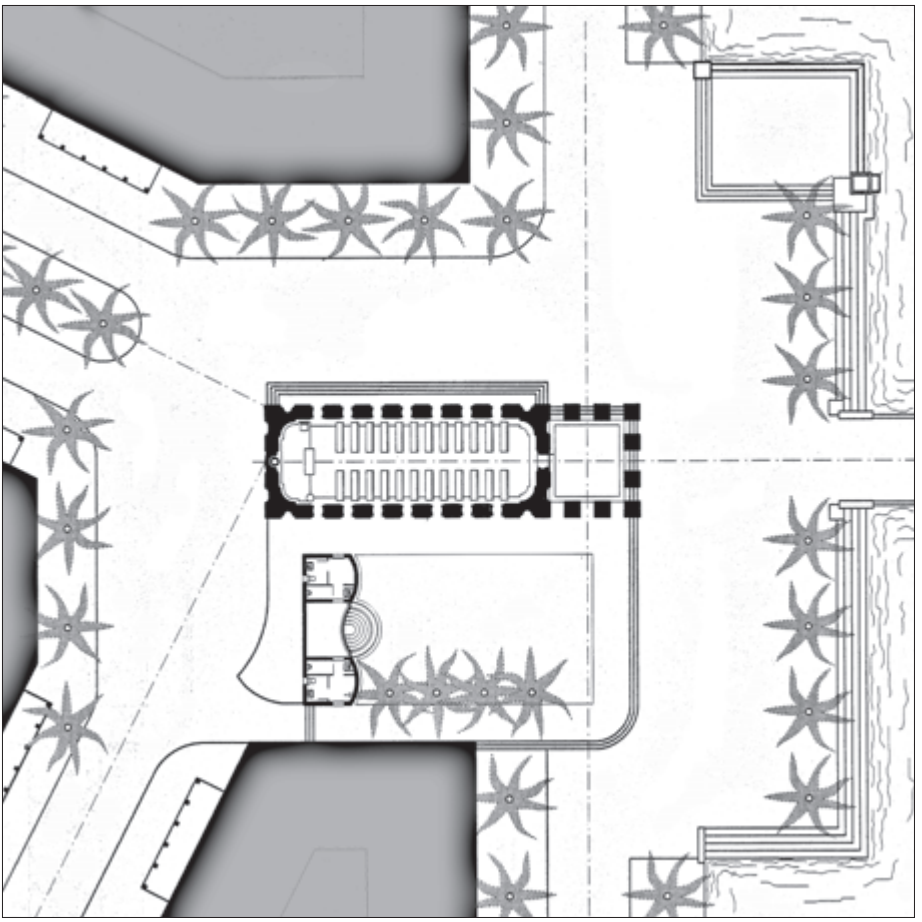
Rather than offending the skyline of the town, it complements it with an essential component.

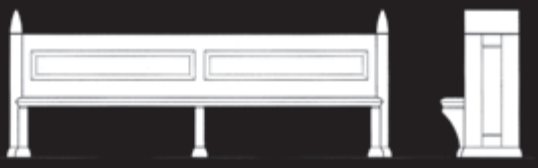
The simplicity of its internal and external volumes differs with the articulate plasticity of houses, its elevated porch, its multitude of doors and arched windows, its very openness contrasting with the protective enclosures of private homes further enhance the public character of this unique structure.

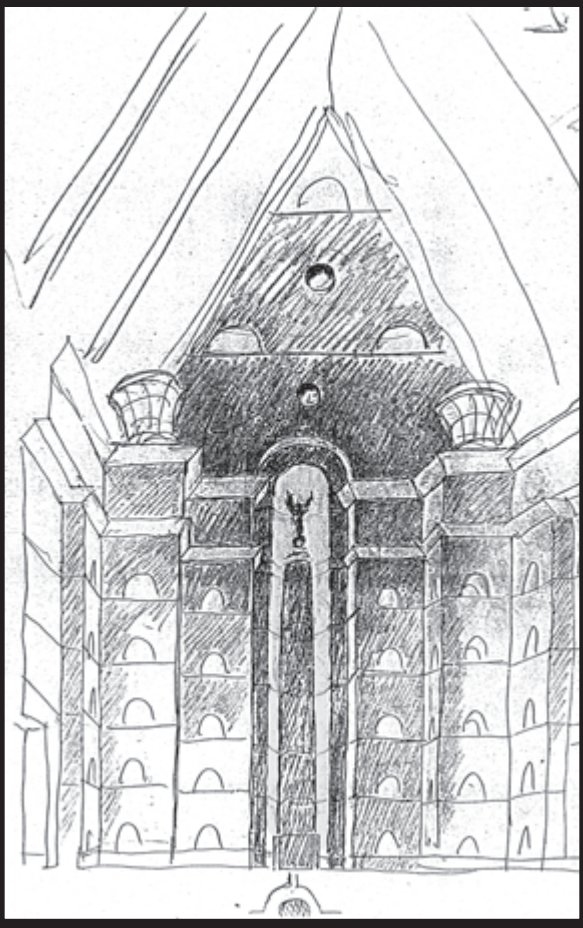
The monumentality of its scale, the unfamiliar size and sheer repetition of its elements at once establish and proclaim its exceptional, uniquely civic status as shelter and symbol of the community.

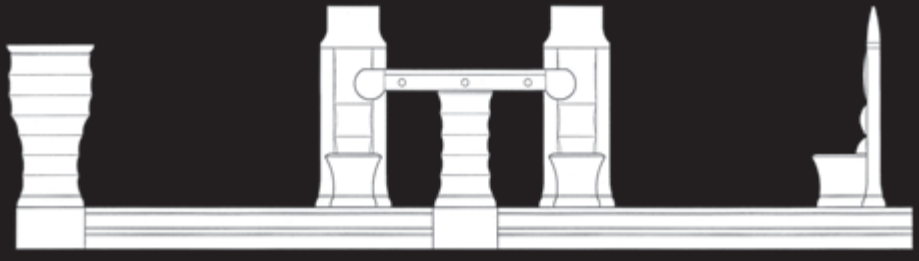
VILLAGE HALL, VERO BEACH, FLORIDA, L.K. WITH MERRILL & PASTOR ARCHITECTS, 1989–1999.

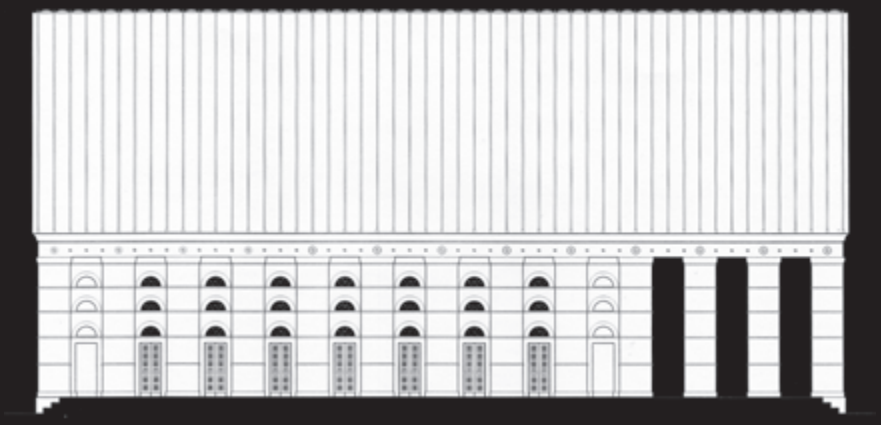


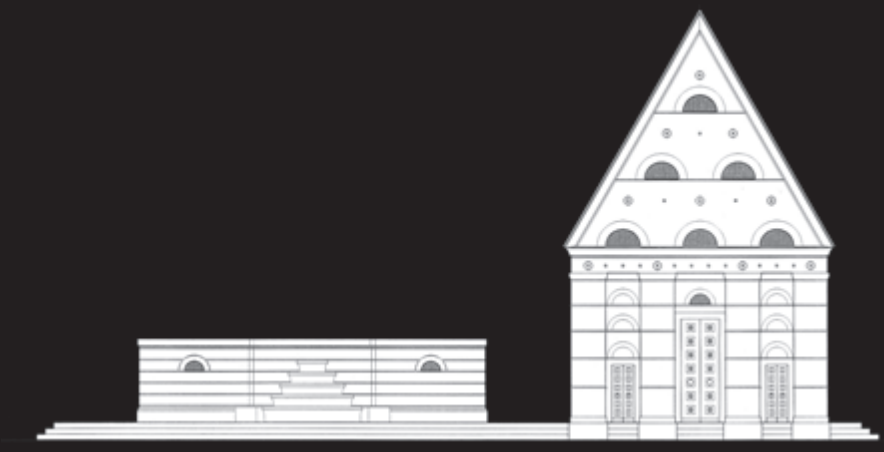


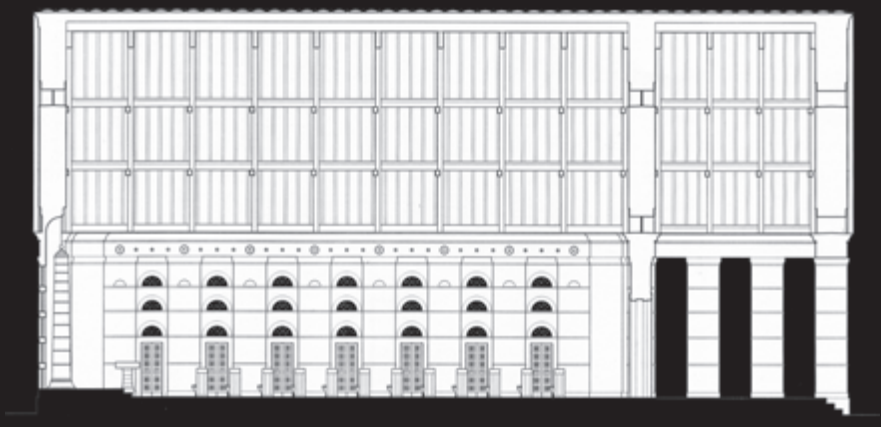








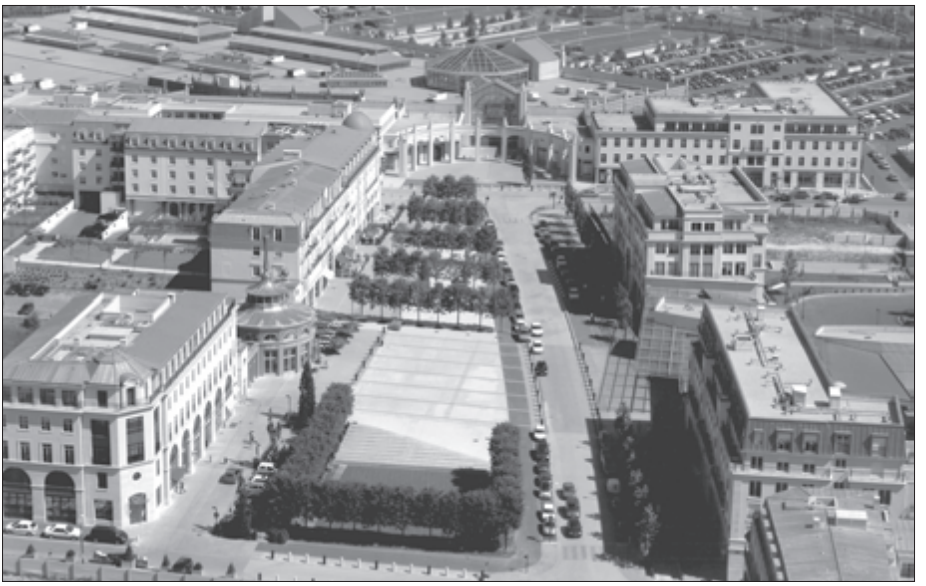




BAR
L'AGAPE CAFE
PUB

BRASSERIE AGAPE PLACE D'ARIANE VAL D'EUROPE, FRANCE 1999 – 2003

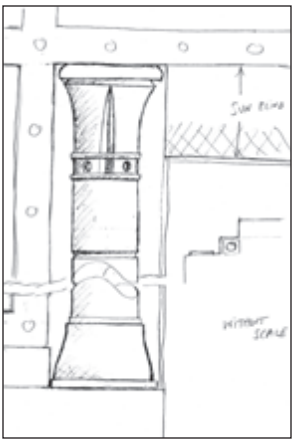
Late-twentieth-century French New Towns are notorious for the nightmarish quality of their planning and architecture. It is ironic that it should fall upon an American developer with an American masterplanner to reinvent a French town for the French people. Val D'Europe is an extraordinary success with the citizens and users and an object of scorn for most architects. Jaque Robertson was able to masterplan the town and encode the privately developed blocks; the public buildings and public spaces landscaping and lighting however are beyond his control and display all the characteristics of jaded regime modernism.

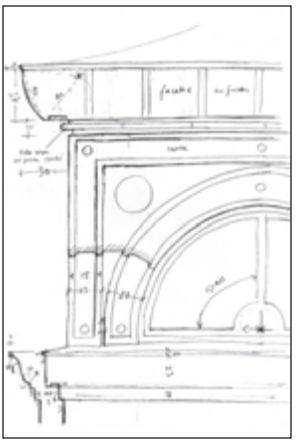


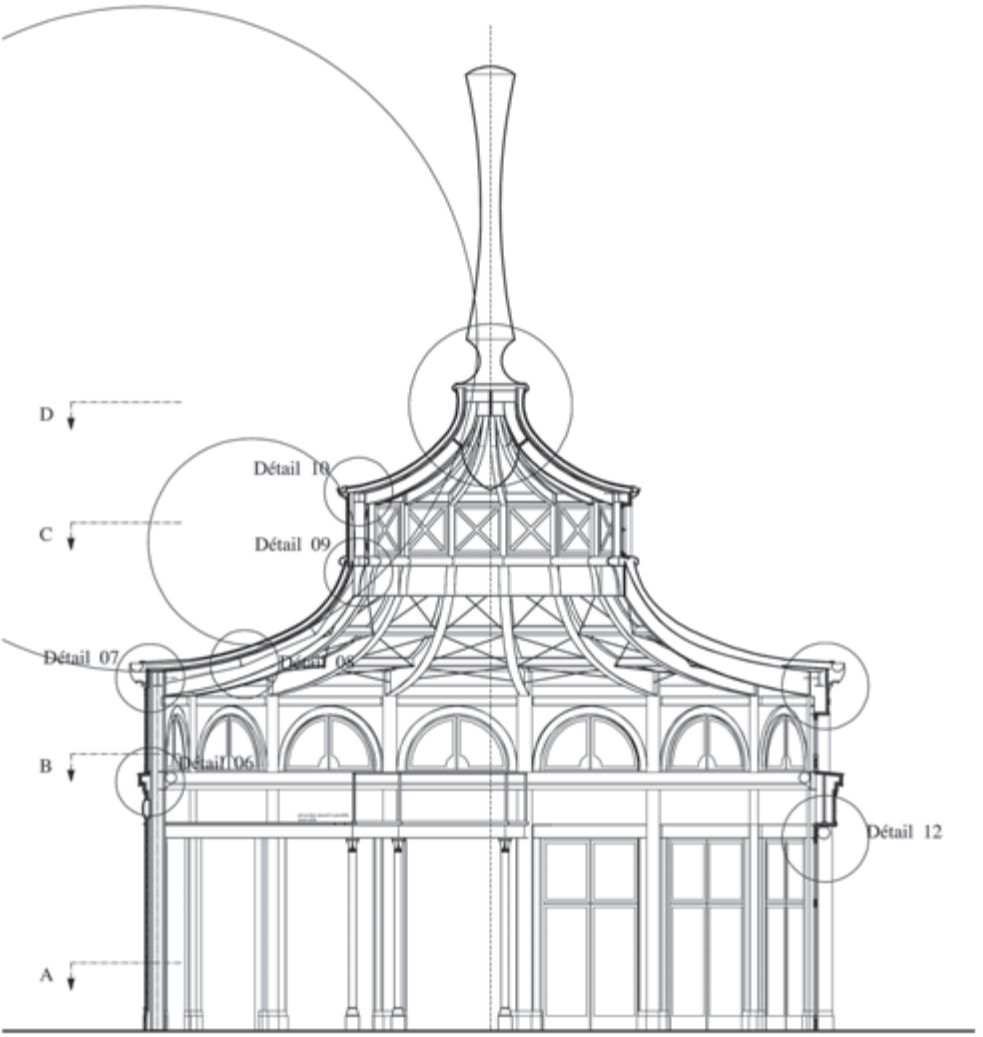
ARCHITECTS: L.K. with COLUM MULHERN

BAR

The design of the brasserie Agape, despite its focal location. escaped somewhat the official *diktat* because of its private funding. The landmark building is the first object arriving travelers see when leaving the rail station. It is built on the bridge covering the tracks of the regional train line (RER) and is therefore conceived in metal carpentry and cladding. The fine detail, color, and particularly the interior design eluded the architect's control, and it is hoped that future occupiers may do fuller justice to the aesthetics of the original project.



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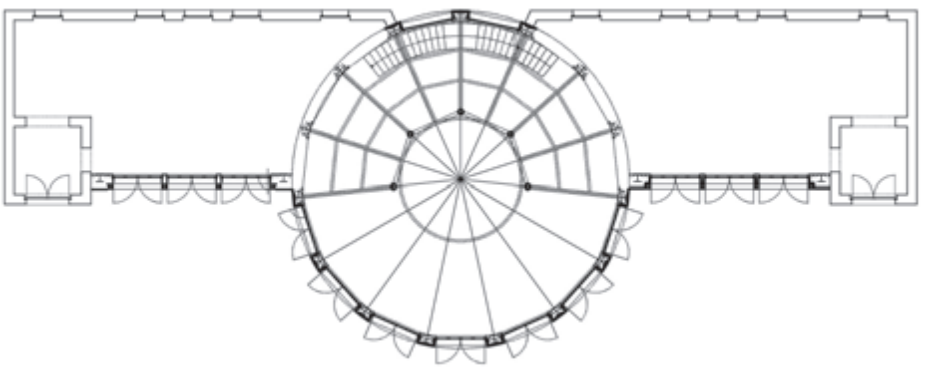
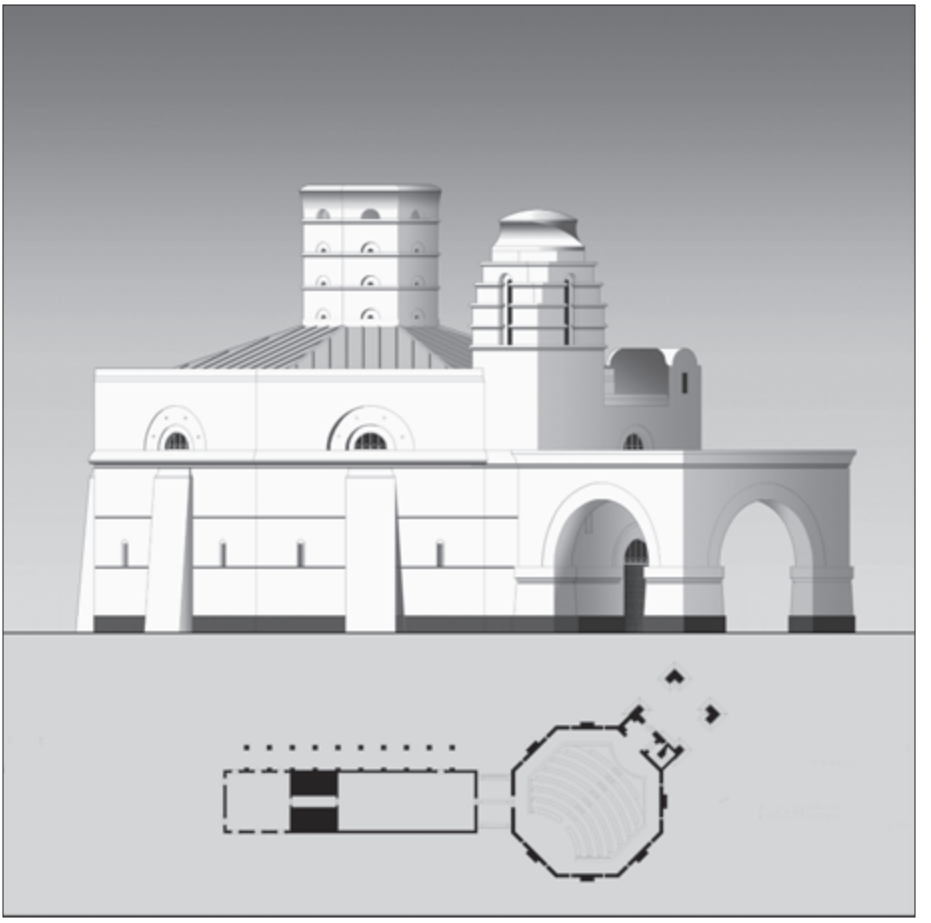


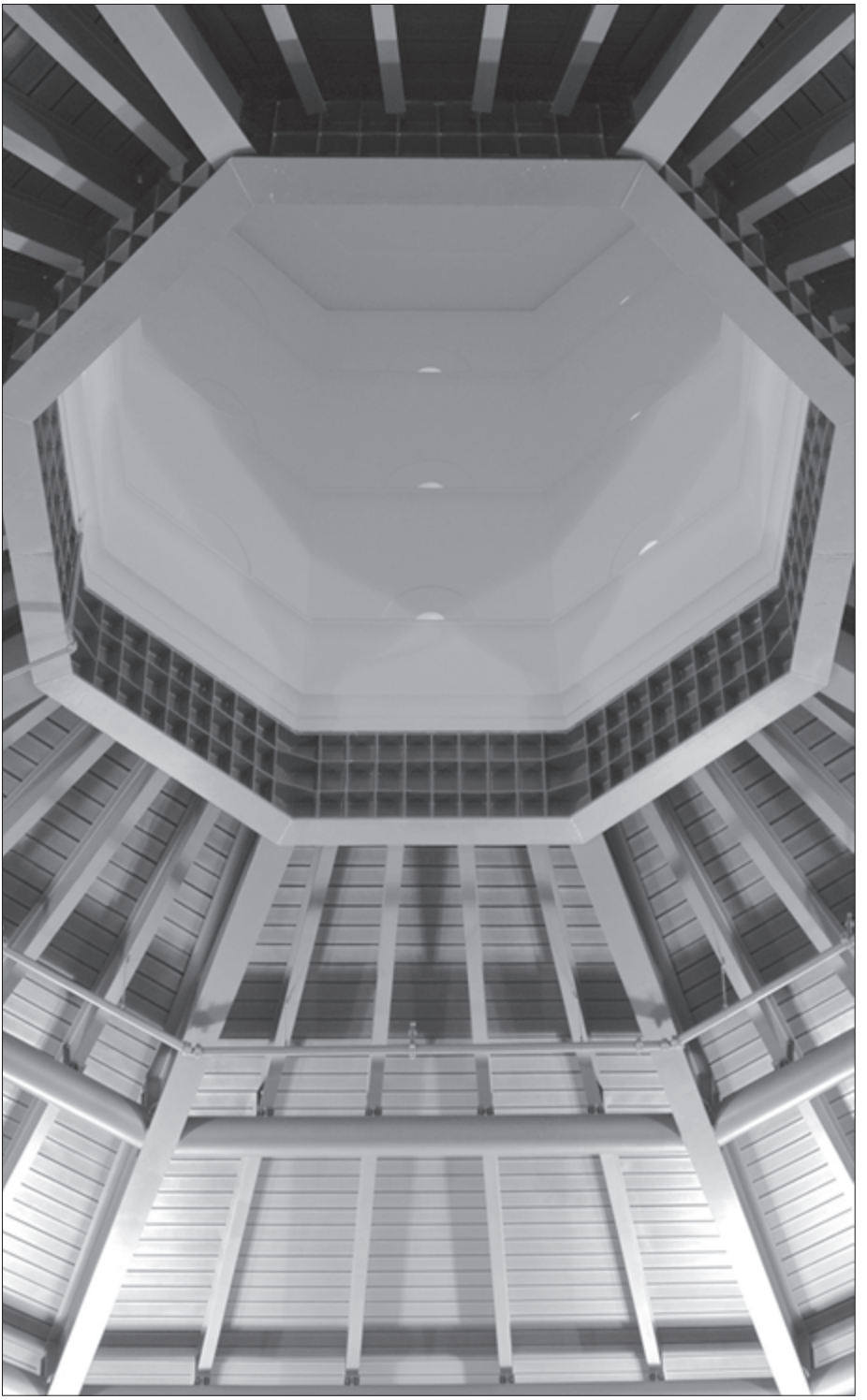
THE JORGE M. PEREZ ARCHITECTURE CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI, CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA
1999 – 2005

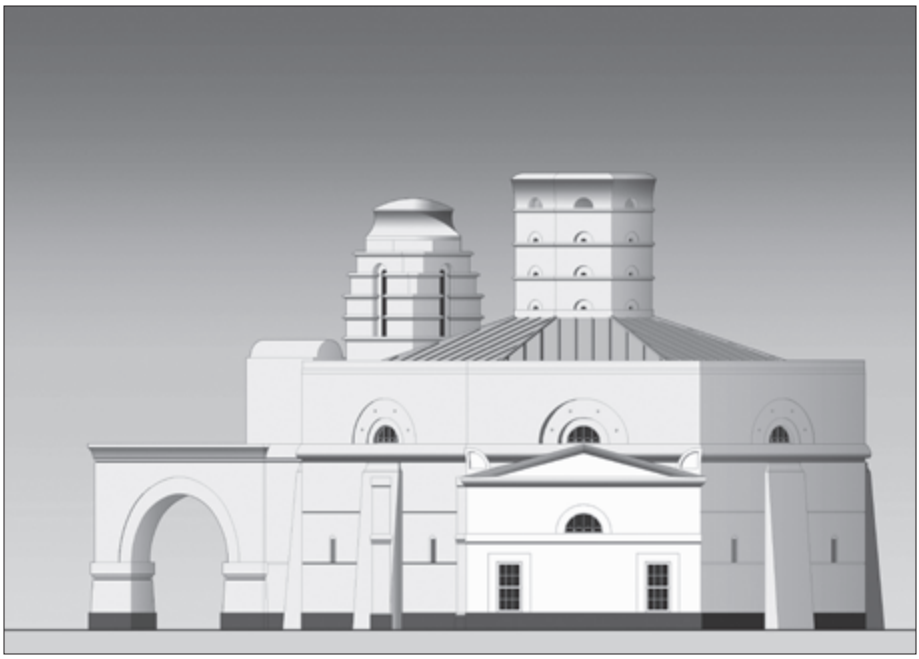
ARCHITECTS: L.K. with MERRILL AND PASTOR ARCHITECTS
ARCHITECT-OF-RECORD: FERGUSON, GLASGOW, SCHUSTER, AND SOTO, INC.

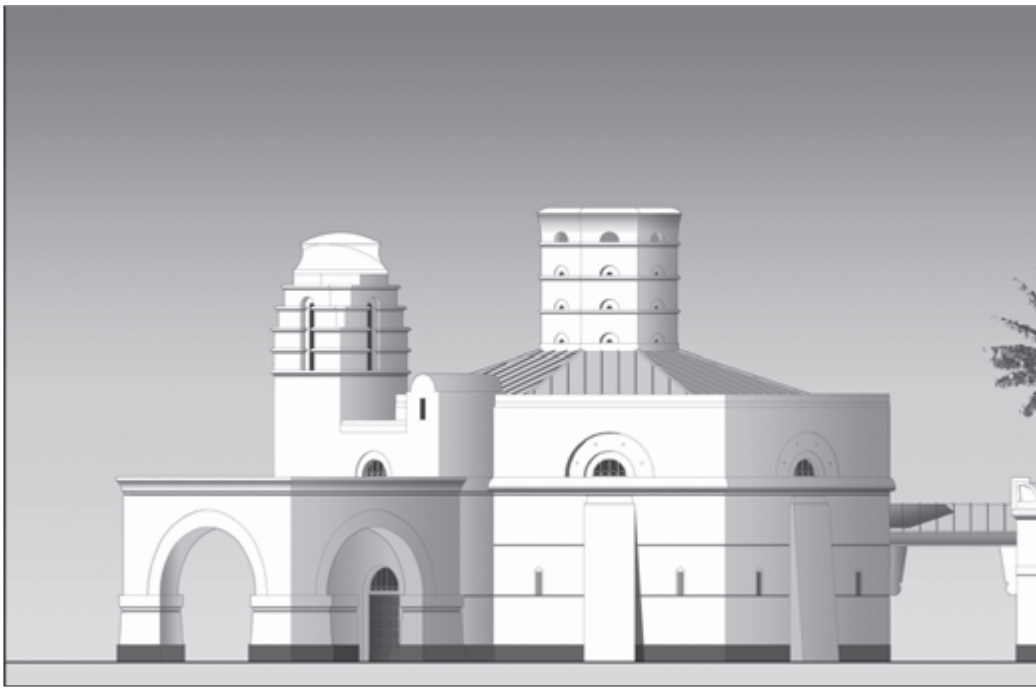
·THE·JORGE·M·PEREZ·ARCHITECTURE·CENTER·
1215

CENTRAL PARK(ING)









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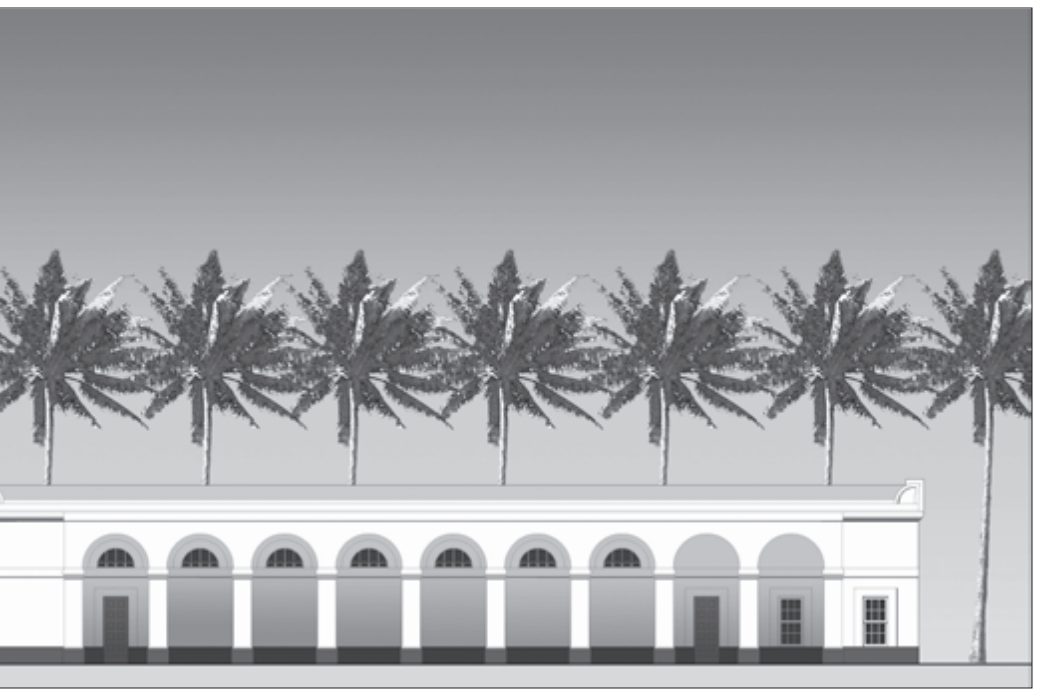
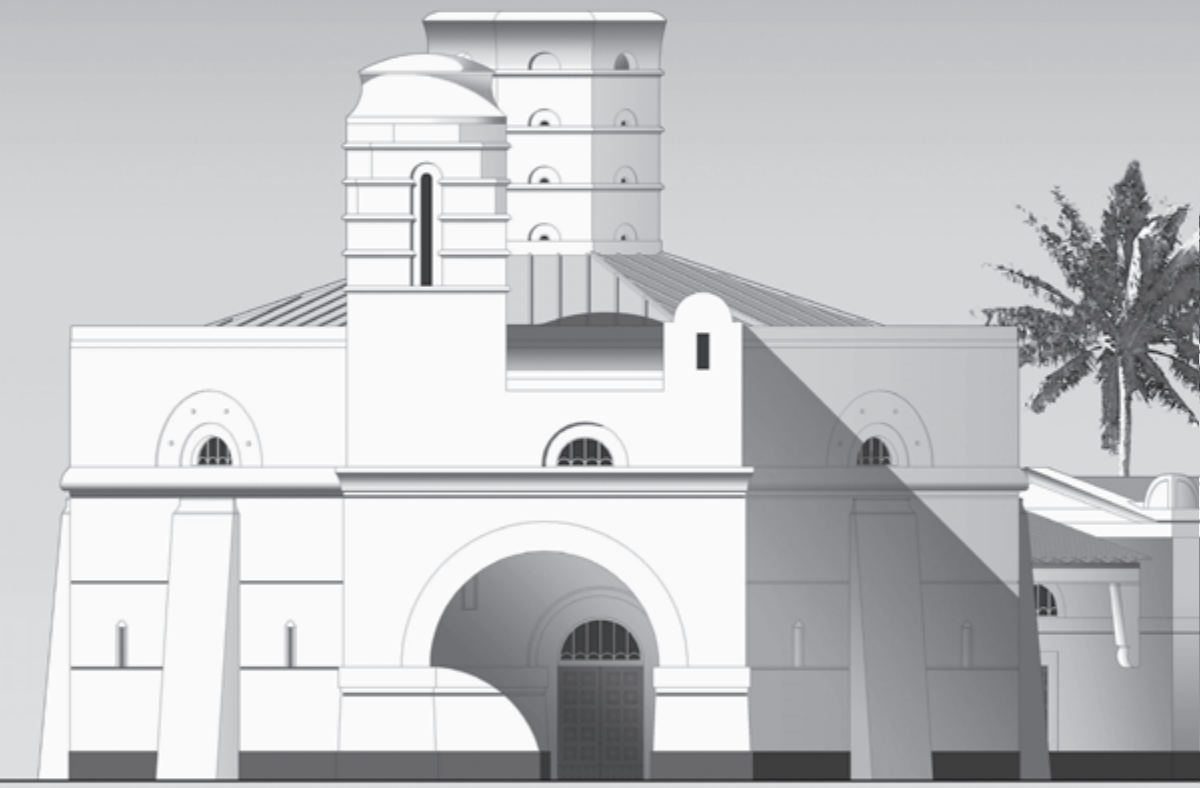


JORGE M. PEREZ ARC

• STANLEY AND JEWELL GLASGOW LE

• MARSHALL AND VERA LEA RINK



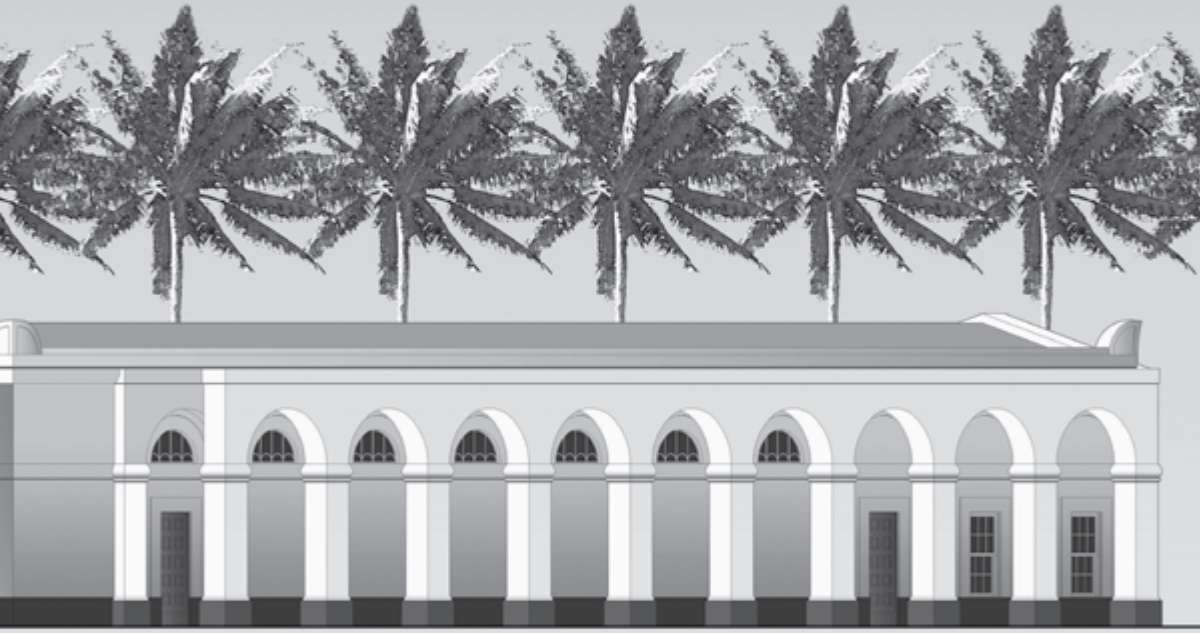
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

• SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE •

SPRING 2005

CHITECTURE CENTER

LECTURE HALL • THOMAS F. DALY LOGGIA •
NKER DIGITAL CONFERENCING ROOM •



LEON KRIER DESIGNER
• WITH MERRILL AND PASTOR ARCHITECTS •
IN ASSOCIATION WITH
FERGUSON, GLASGOW, SCHUSTER, AND SOTO

JORGE M. PEREZ ARCHITECTURE CENTER UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI, CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA

by

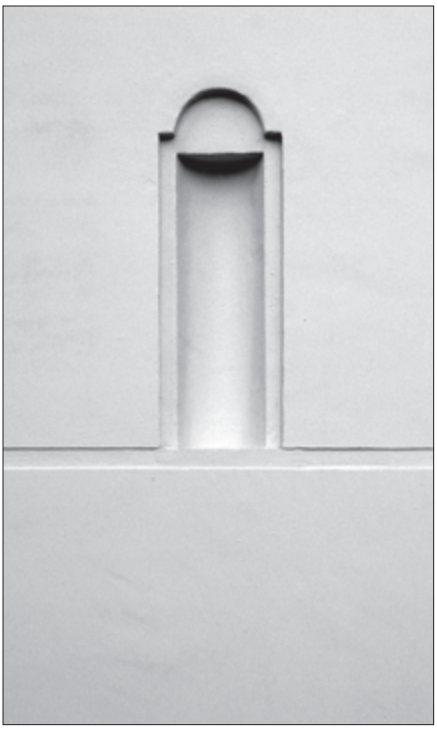
ALEXANDER GORLIN

It seemed like a match made in classical heaven, Léon Krier, the patron saint of New Urbanism, apostate of modernism and former protégé of James Stirling, is brought to the University of Miami by the dean of the architecture school Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk. Here he was to continue the mission of Aldo Rossi, recently deceased, to design a lecture hall and gallery to be the focal point of the school. Previously, students had to trek across campus for lectures, so there was little cohesion in the school other than that afforded by late night charettes. I must immediately confess a disclaimer, as I donated a paltry sum to the building fund, and thus am a sympathizer to the cause.

With the full support of the dean, an eminently accomplished architect and urban planner, as well as the faculty, what could go wrong? This being Florida, as we know, the unexpected is the norm, whether in politics or in architecture. As the irresistible force meets the immovable object, so did the legendary Krier have numerous plans rejected by the staunchly modernist Buildings and Grounds Committee, who were less than sympathetic to a traditional building of any kind whatsoever on campus. Ironically, in this land of Mediterranean arches, the final scheme was shelved for two years until the president of Related Developers, Jorge Perez, donated funds on the condition that a specific design be built or there would be no money forthcoming. With enormous effort, a version of this scheme was built, with the overall massing quite accurate, but the details best understood under the lens of impressionism, fuzzy and out of focus.

Part of the problem was a result of the fact that three architects were ultimately involved with the project. An initial donation by the alumnus firm of Ferguson, Glasgow, Schuster, and Soto Inc. stipulated that they be the architects of the building. Then Krier was brought on as design architect with Merrill, Pastor & Colgan Architects of Vero Beach, Florida, with whom Krier had previously worked, translated his hand sketches into design development drawings. Too many cooks have stewed up a less than five star Michelin bouillabaisse of sorts.

Urbanistically, it is a powerful and mysterious work of architecture that resolves a number of formerly gelatinously undifferentiated spaces and streets on campus. A four-sided arched entry connects to a massive octagonal lecture hall, connected by an open breezeway to a basilica-like gallery with a freestanding loggia standing beside. A superb example of primitive classicism, it has none of the



expected orders or moldings, but embodies the essence of the classical gravitas and weight appropriate to a civic building at the center of an institution of higher education. Alone among architects working in a traditional syntax, Krier has extended the vocabulary of classicism through bold use of proportion and a free interpretation of tropes and motifs.

Two towers crown the building that do not recall any specific precedents, other than a vernacular dovecote or a Roman columbarium. A second bell tower stands astride, also recalling white washed Greek villages and funereal structures. Of course the memorial building was tradition in educational architecture, the center of the Yale campus is an elegiac monument to the fallen of World War I. Together, as the towers shift and align across space, they do bring to mind the twin steeples of St. Martinville in Proust's *Swann's Way*. Krier's architecture has this literary and memorable sensibility that defies an exact recall, as opposed to the more transparent metaphors, of for example Robert Stern.

The inside of the lecture hall has an industrially detailed dome of exposed steel beams and decking, surmounting a steeply raked series of seats at desks. Again multiple readings from a City Council chamber to a nineteenth century dissection theater are aroused. The space presents the idea of education as a shared experience, of learning together in a crucible of space as opposed the passive auditoria of most schools today.

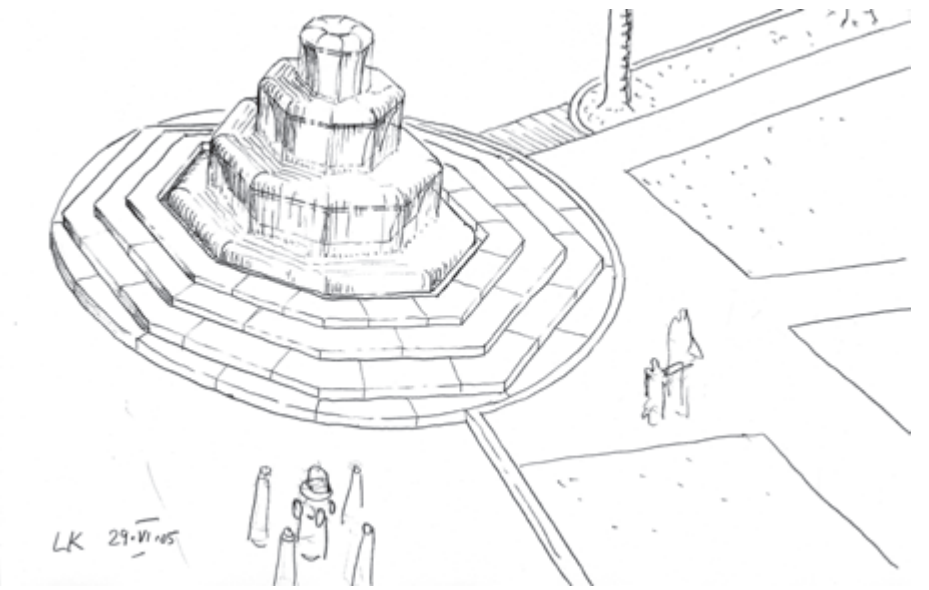
Attached to the hall is the gallery, a long open structure with half-round clerestory windows that functions as a multi-purpose room. Surprisingly, the interior spaces are actually much simpler than what is expected from the outside, which is divided into a complex village of parts, breaking up the scale. The fragmentation of the massing serves to create a series of exterior spaces and terminating vistas that organize a campus that was a complete mess to anyone who encountered the architecture school before. The low horizontal buildings, designed by the first woman architect in Florida, Marion Manley, are innocuous enough (now painted white, with details in De Stijl – black, red, blue, and yellow) but did not make any coherent places for students to congregate. Now the loggia and lecture hall create a "piazza," a central gathering space for the school. This was accomplished by the "knuckle and bar" diagram of the building following the lead of Hadrian's Villa, circular water enclosure, as a means of unifying the disorder of the existing plan.

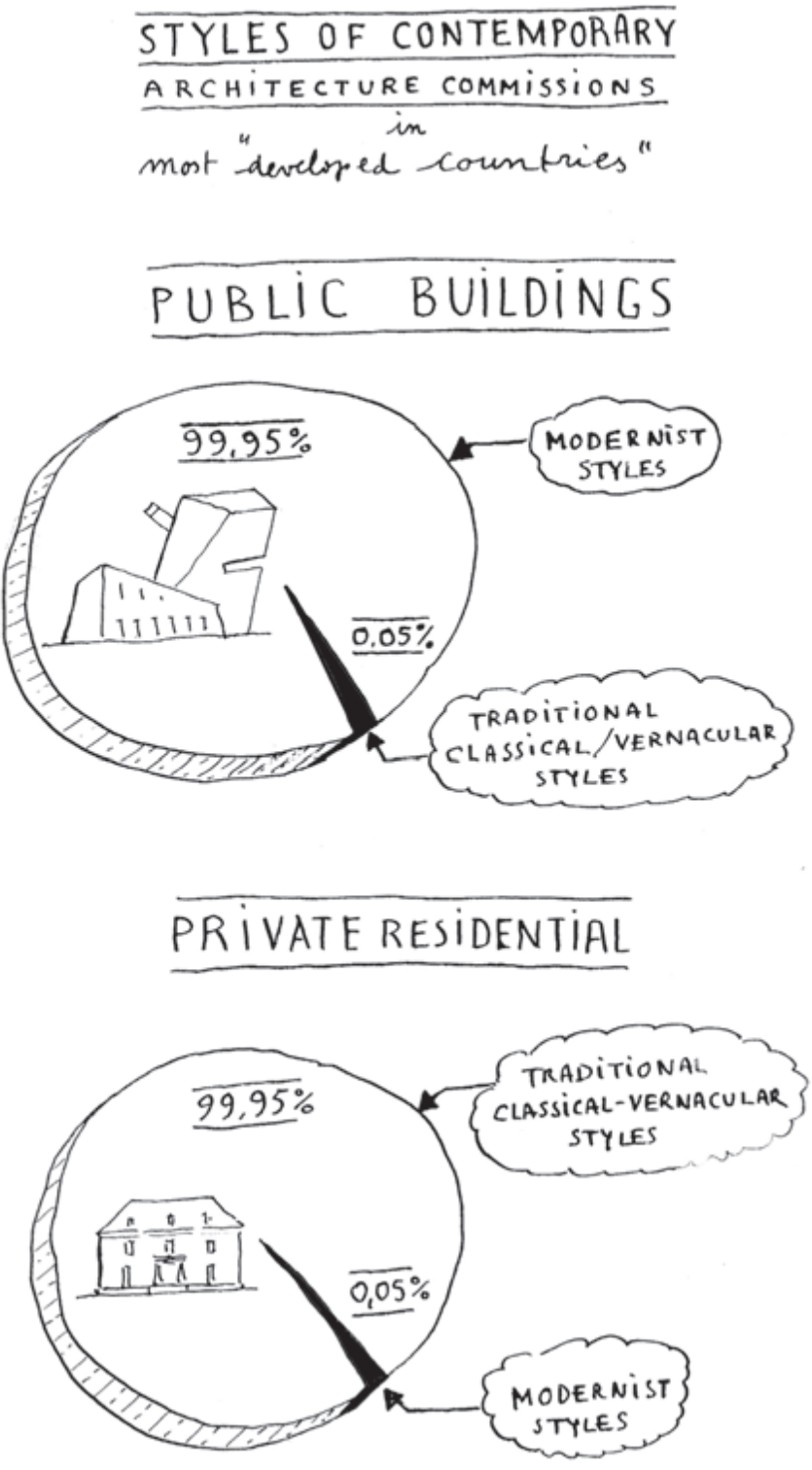
Realizing the project is another story, over five years for a 8,600 square foot building, with Krier, full of "sound and fury," in the end signifying a building with many construction errors, although mostly relegated to details. Dean Plater-Zyberk has stated that this is an educational building and therefore even the problems are lessons; in that light the building is a resounding success. Firstly,

reflecting the dismal state of architectural remuneration (as opposed to the Law School) the alumnae could not raise sufficient funds and there was heavy "value engineering," a code word for slash and burn. For example, a layer of stucco was peeled away for cost reasons, resulting in reveals that do not create the intended shadow lines in the harsh sub-tropical sun. Krier contends and wanted discussed, that there were many details not built per his plan, or built upside down, or not at all. In great measure much of this is due to the low level of craftsmanship of the Miami builder. Of course, some of the details that Krier pointed out, such as the missing aspects of the intrados, or the missing filets and conge, may be due to the fact that the builders had no idea what he was talking about. Someone should have told Krier that Southern Florida is not Switzerland. Looking around in Miami at the typical state of architectural detail would give pause to anyone attempting detailing requiring a Latin (and I don't mean Spanish) nomenclature. Like the tragic King Lear, Krier rails against the forces of nature and construction that have arrayed against the perfect realization of his architectural vision.

In the end, Krier's work is radical in its refusal to be trendy, to reduce architecture to a word, be it "sponge, porosity, rhizome, or contamination." His architecture employs the full array of forms and ideas that ironically is now closest to Le Corbusier's "Three Reminders to Architects" in Towards a New Architecture – Mass, Surface, and Plan. The Jorge M. Perez Architecture Center is a flawed masterpiece; perhaps a future generation will restore or complete the work to its full glory of precise detail.

This review was first published in Architectural Record, *October 2006 and is reprinted with permission.*




STYLES OF CONTEMPORARY
ARCHITECTURE COMMISSIONS
in
most "developed countries"
PUBLIC BUILDINGS
99,95%
MODERNIST STYLES
0.05%
TRADITIONAL CLASSICAL/VERNACULAR STYLES
PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL
99,95%
TRADITIONAL CLASSICAL-VERNACULAR STYLES
0,05%
MODERNIST STYLES

THE RICHARD H. DRIEHAUS PRIZE FOR CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE

Be it in democratic or totalitarian countries, the reign of modernism has been so complete for the last half century that few people wonder why the great awards for half a century have solely recompensed architects who practice exclusively modernist styles, ranging from Bauhaus to deconstruction, from so-called "high-tech" to "critical regionalism."

The ideological monopoly has extended to architectural teaching, competitions, publishing, and, above all, to public commissions. The creation of The Richard H. Driehaus Prize for Classical Architecture breaks this untenable sectarian deadlock and announces the long-awaited democratization of architecture, a sea change in the official architectural culture today.

LAUDATIO FOR JAQUE ROBERTSON
DRIEHAUS PRIZE AWARD CEREMONY, CHICAGO
March 31, 2007

Speaking of classicism in 1980, Jaquelin Robertson said, "If you take that direction you can't stop halfway." I am more than delighted that his journey and exemplary achievements are crowned by the prestigious Richard H. Driehaus Prize. It was when Jaque took Demetri Porphyrios and me seriously that we finally did so ourselves. Under his too brief and brilliant aegis, Jefferson's University of Virginia campus became the breeding ground of a reenchanted future. But I have been specifically asked to contribute a few words about the state and movement of classical architecture today. I feel like the old professor who mumbled, "I know so much that I don't know where to start."

A young man asked me yesterday, "Are you an optimist or a pessimist?" I am definitely a pessimist, but like most of us, I enjoy it every day.

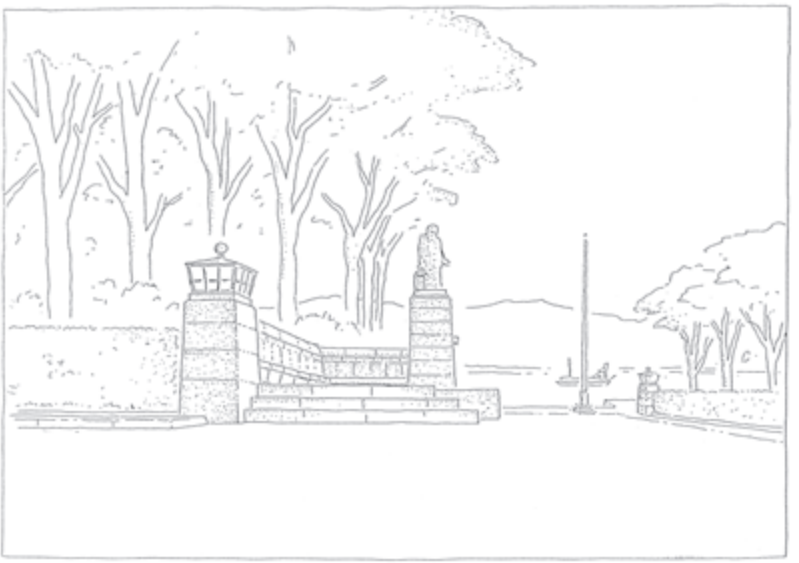
Flying in from Europe and looking at the vast expanses of Canada and the northern United States, I was reminded of Jaque's comment, "Our cities are but collections of spare parts waiting to be assembled into something more meaningful." Unlike the built pattern of older urban civilizations, they do indeed look mostly like storage areas for buildings, vehicles, and materials. Their temporary nature and schematic order seem to proclaim an ephermeral existence, "We won't be here for long." In fact, even the staunchest optimism will vacillate when realizing that not only is the planet now vastly overpopulated, but that we generally build in the wrong locations, patterns, materials, types, densities, and styles.

In an eye of environmental ephemera, the Driehaus Prize winners are in fact the generals of an army of the shadow, upholding the flame of nations, beautiful and robust building. So what are we to make of the common modernist reproach that classicism is too easy? In fact the opposite is true, for it is a counterculture of the authentic against the synthetic. The technology and aesthetic of traditional vernacular and classical architecture worldwide are linked to the processing of natural materials – wood, clay, stone, earth. Their forms derive from, and their techniques are conditioned by, the use of those materials. They are strictly material-based. To realize authentic traditional structures with synthetic materials and their specific fitting techniques (nailing, soldering, riveting, gluing, casting) is not only an ontological paradox but it requires extreme design control and discipline. This explains the aura of the fake, the ersatz, the surrogate, which is characteristic of 99 percent of neo-traditional designs of the past decades. It is the latter, and not modernism, that is the deadly enemy of classicism today.

Not by chance is the production of synthetic construction materials dependent on the use of fossil fuels. Their days as banal construction materials are therefore numbered. Before too long, steel-reinforced concretes, inoxidable metals, plate glass, glues, and nails will become again precious materials, making the fake more expensive than the authentic.

Meanwhile we are, in advanced industrial countries, almost everywhere condemned to build not authentic traditional buildings but full-size models of such designs, When, 30 years ago, I stated that "I don't build because I am an architect" and "I can make true architecture because I do not build," I did not quite realize how correct that intuition was. According to James Howard Kunstler, our civilization is literally drunk on fossil fuel. Behind us lies a century of environmental mismanagement of a global scale, of building cities and landscapes without a possible future of overextending supply lines, overpopulating the planet, overexploiting soil and energy resources. Horizontal or vertical sprawl, excessive dilution or concentration of settlement in the wrong locations, materials, and climate don't make any more sense whether they are dressed with traditionalist or modernist curtain wall.

Al Gore says that between ignoring environmental problems and despairing of them there must be a middle way. In fact after sleepwalking too long in latitude of extreme danger, there can only be a middle way forward. The global, high-tech-eco-kitsch fictions will soon evaporate to make place for a global ecological reconstruction project. Traditional architecture and urbanism, vernacular building, and classical architecture are its operative tools.



Avenue du Golf

HAMEAU DES PINS
HARDELOT, FRANCE,
2001 – 2004

MASTERPLAN: LÉON KRIER
ARCHITECTURE: ARCAS, MAURICE CULOT

POUNDBURY FARM, POUNDBURY, DORCHESTER

Client:	Duchy of Cornwall
Masterplan & Architectural Coordination 1988 onwards:	Léon Krier
1988 - 1991:	LK with Líam O'Connor
2004 onwards:	LK with Colum Mulhern
Development Director:	Andrew Hamilton
Development Manager:	Simon Conibear
Consulting Engineer:	Alan Baxter & Associates – AKS Ward
Building Codes:	Andres Duany
Architectural Coordination	
1993 – 2000:	Peterjohn Smyth
2000 – 2006:	David Oliver
2007 – 2009:	Ben Pentreath
Principal Architects:	Robert Adam, Craig Hamilton, Trevor Harris, Clive Hawkins, Johnny Holland, Janusz Maçiag, Ken Morgan, Líam O'Connor, David Oliver, Ben Pentreath, Demtri Porphyrios, George Saumarez-Smith, Graham Saunders, John Simpson, Peterjohn Smyth, John Souter, Quinlan & Francis Terry, Barbara Weiss, and David Wren.

POUNDBURY

After years of wholesale condemnation by the media *The Independent's* recent headline "AND THE PRINCE HAS GOT IT RIGHT" announces a sea change in the reporting on Poundbury. With the Duchy of Cornwall's Dorset development, the Prince of Wales's vision is becoming a built, lived in, worked in, truly modern reality; people like it and they buy into it; the clientele is as varied as the architecture; there is no social, functional, or architectural uniformity. Poundbury is not a philanthropic experiment; it is not an endowed development; it works on the basis of the logic of the market, by supply and demand. It does not have the status of a new town; it has no state funding to pay for its infrastructure. It is not a unique experiment but is eminently reproducible. Despite its blacklisting by the modernist culture mafia, word is spreading, both nationally and internationally, that Poundbury is a model for desirable development.

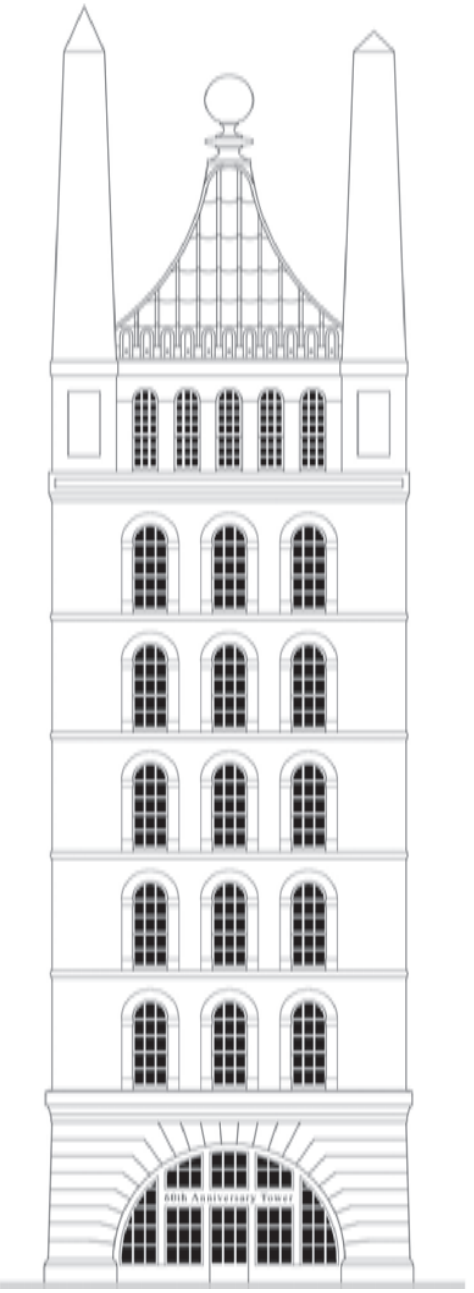
In December 1997 building started on the last section of Phase I: the Middle Farm quarter. Ninety-seven percent of the buildings have been sold off the drawing board, an unusual occurrence in the United Kingdom and proof of the extraordinary market success of a radically "different" experiment.

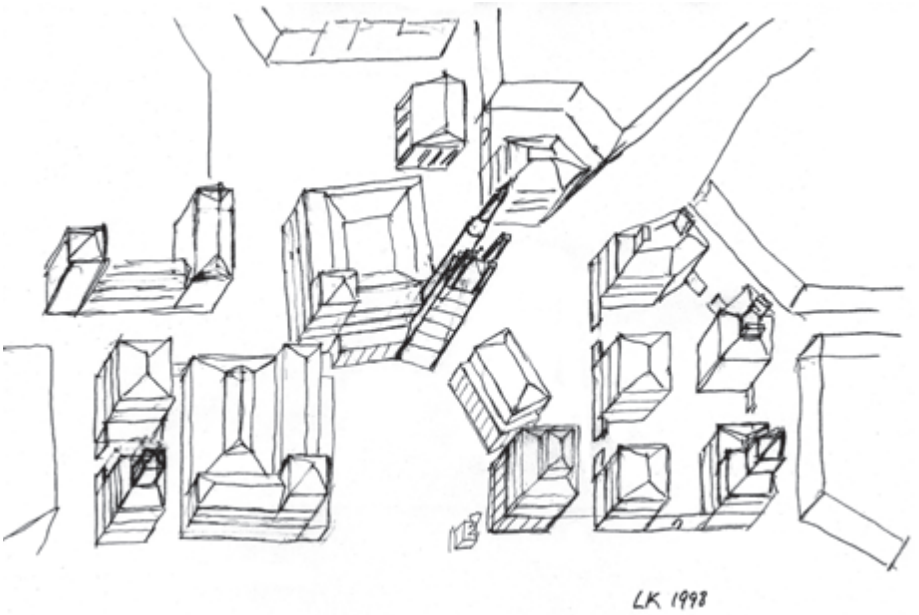
At the same time the first urban industrial complex of Phase II is nearing completion and another 40,000 sq. ft. industry is laying foundations. While modernist critics continue to pour scorn on their preferred target, some of the first settlers are reselling their homes at a profit in order to acquire larger properties in the new Middle Farm section. There are more than 270 applicants for the 40 units in the Renaissance Centre, condemned by the local press as "Kolditz Krier." Disproving the predictions of established real estate experts, there now exists a waiting list for non-residential uses (industrial, commercial, offices) exceeding all expectations. All of which proves that the free market is (1) not conservative when given a choice; (2) not anti-social, anti-aesthetic, or anti-urban when given a chance.

Poundbury has literally been developed without a development program. There is no preconceived program of buildings and uses. The masterplan consists essentially of a building-plot plan and a set of development principles. The attitude toward uses avoids uniformity and area zoning and is inclusive rather than exclusive. It is essentially open to any market demand, which is directed toward an adequate plot – the largest being 80,000 sq. ft., the smallest 1,500 sq. ft. Large plots are always located on the edge of each quarter where they are easily reached by heavy vehicles. The most prominent sites and plots are reserved for public buildings and uses. These do not have any preconceived program either. When the need arises for a village hall, plots that satisfy the client as well as the masterplanner are available.

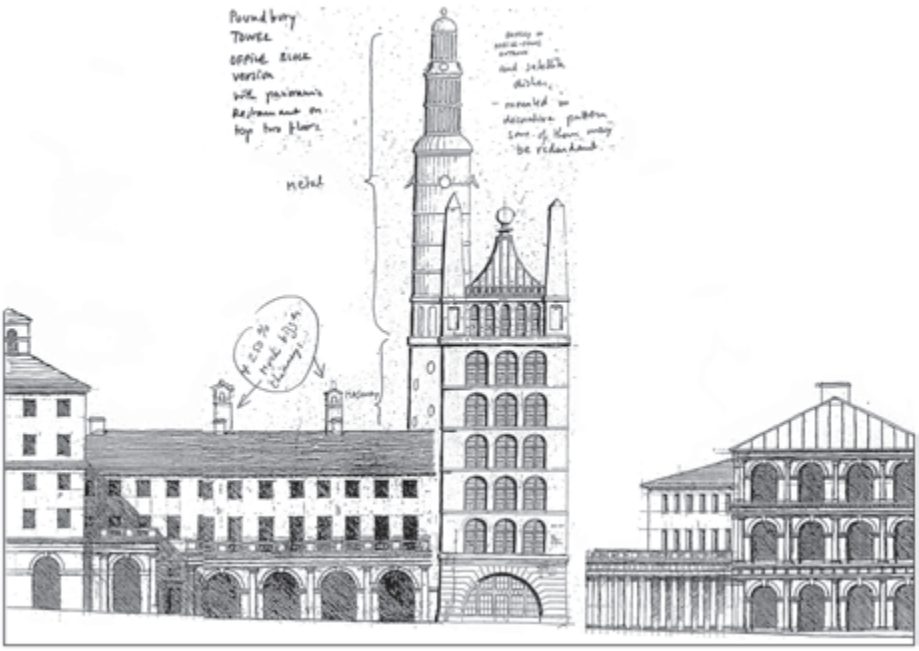
POUNDBURY

DORCHESTER





Opposite, Above and Below: The civic center formed by Queen Mother Square will occupy the highest ground of Poundbury new town. The 60th Anniversary Tower designed by Léon Krier terminates several avenues and main streets. The square is crowned by the new county court, a hotel, a market building, and an office block designed by Quinlan and Francis Terry. Following the principles of architectural tuning this most formal square in town is also architecturally its most elaborate and adorned. The Queen Mother monument is its focal point.



POUNDBURY

DORCHESTER

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Four Urban Quarters – Four Urban Centers.

Local centers within five-minute walk of main civic center.

Block structure and main public spaces.

Mews structure – parking courts and alleys.

Urban quarter boundaries and main public buildings.

Main streets linking all four quarters.

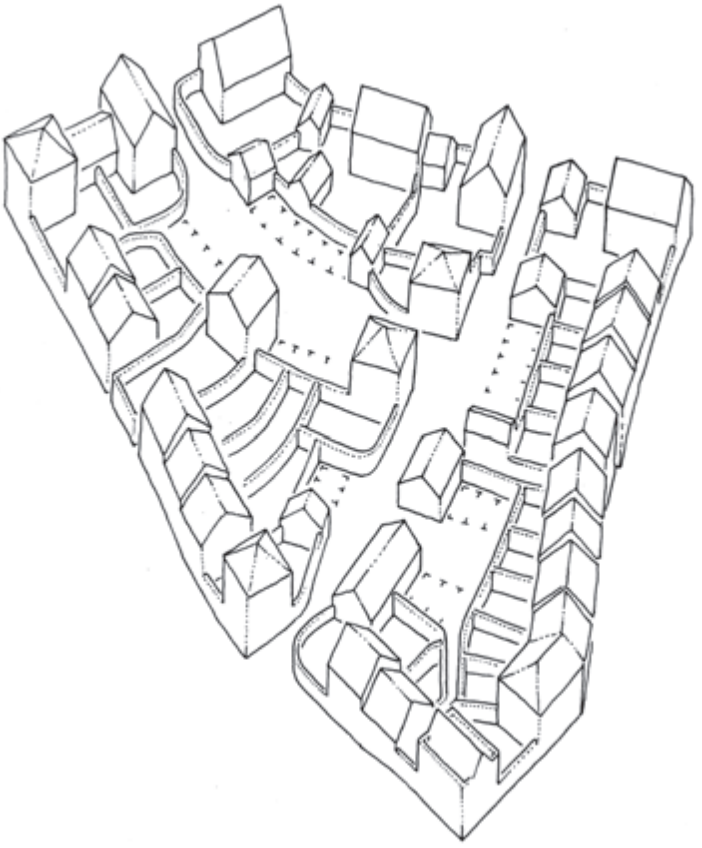
Road hierarchy – through and local traffic.

Employment sites, private and public – approximately one work place per residential unit.

Traffic and the Geometry of Public Spaces.
All streets, avenues, mews, even passages and alleys are designed to be good spaces, i.e., they are not mere leftovers; they do not run carelessly from horizon to horizon; they do not run idiotically into dead ends. Some focus on buildings, others on the landscape. Within the quarters, streets are relatively short and winding. Meanders that slow down rivers do the same to traffic flows, without the use of signs or gadgets. Only the Parkway and the avenues dividing the quarters and focusing on major landscape or built features run relatively or even dead straight. This extremely varied geometric pattern not only establishes an unusually wide hierarchical scale of road types, but it encourages varied and subtle behavior from drivers, inducing more urbane, less mechanical reactions.

The guiding principle of functional distribution is to achieve in each completed urban quarter a checkerboard dispersal of uses, i.e., a mix of large and small neighboring plots, of residential and non-residential, of private and institutional uses. Some blocks consist of a single plot, others of several plots, but they always form coherent urban frontages onto a street, an avenue, a square, or an alley. Private space is clearly separated from public space by buildings and high masonry walls.

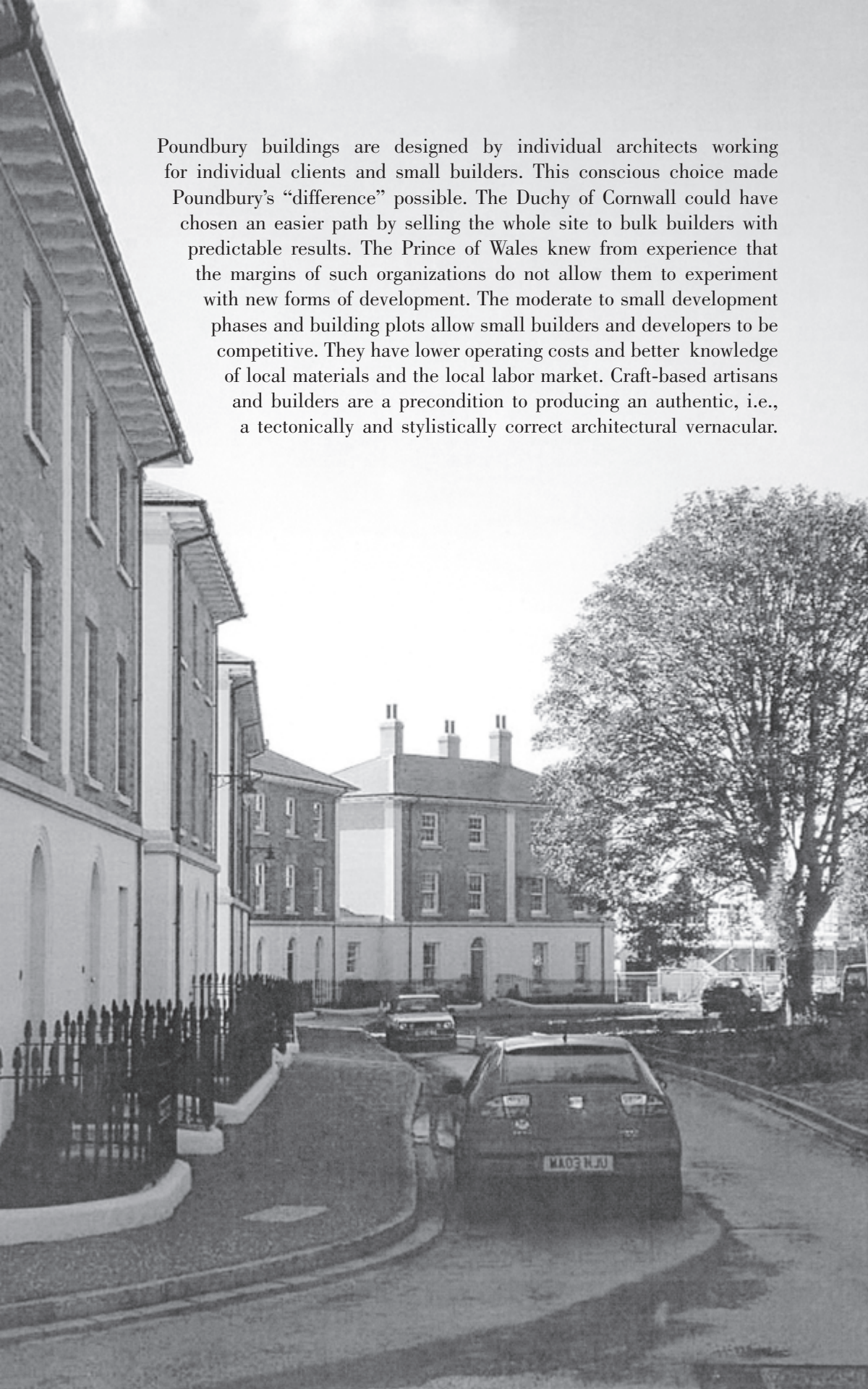
The free geometry of Poundbury's public spaces marries naturally with the simplicity and practicality of vernacular architecture. The clear individuality of each building does not contradict the harmony of the whole. The production costs of standard modern houses and factories, while permitting an authentic vernacular, are not able to realize grand architectural effects; this is one of the many reasons why in Poundbury monumental architecture is reserved for major public buildings.



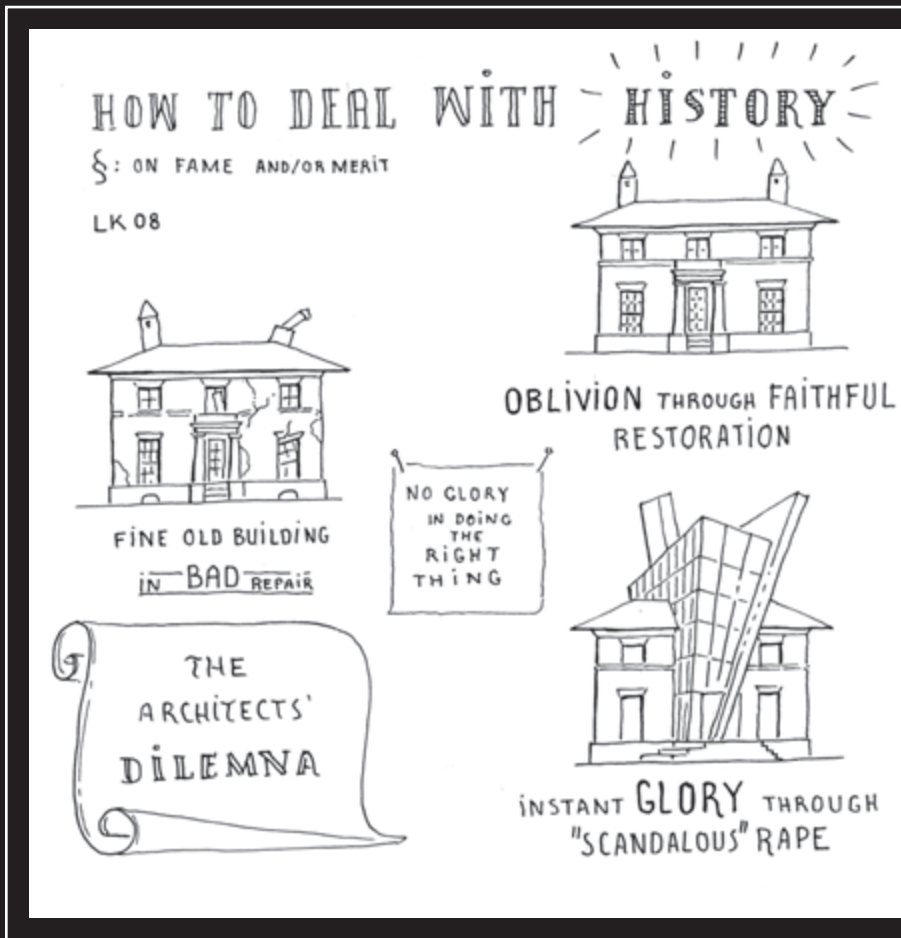
TYPICAL BUILDING BLOCK
The parking mews form a secondary informal network of routes within each quarter.

Workshops are grouped around private parking courtyards. In combination with the typical parking mews this concept achieves a high parking capacity (one car space per 250 square feet of floor space) with a low visual impact on the townscape.

Poundbury buildings are designed by individual architects working for individual clients and small builders. This conscious choice made Poundbury's "difference" possible. The Duchy of Cornwall could have chosen an easier path by selling the whole site to bulk builders with predictable results. The Prince of Wales knew from experience that the margins of such organizations do not allow them to experiment with new forms of development. The moderate to small development phases and building plots allow small builders and developers to be competitive. They have lower operating costs and better knowledge of local materials and the local labor market. Craft-based artisans and builders are a precondition to producing an authentic, i.e., a tectonically and stylistically correct architectural vernacular.



The variety of block and plot configurations and sizes are occupied by different uses, forming the basis for true architectural variety. Buildings look different from their neighbors for existential rather than stylistic reasons.


HOW TO DEAL WITH HISTORY
§: ON FAME AND/OR MERIT
LK 08
OBLIVION THROUGH FAITHFUL RESTORATION
FINE OLD BUILDING IN BAD REPAIR
NO GLORY IN DOING THE RIGHT THING
THE ARCHITECTS' DILEMNA
INSTANT GLORY THROUGH "SCANDALOUS" RAPE

CONCLUSION

THE LAST WORD
by
JAMES HOWARD KUNSTLER

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CONCLUSION

All buildings, large or small, public or private, have a public face, a facade; they therefore, without exception, have a positive or a negative effect on the quality of the public realm, enriching or impoverishing it in a lasting and radical manner. The architecture of the city and public space is a matter of common concern to the same degree as laws and language – they are the foundation of civility and civilization. Without their common acceptance there can be no constitution nor maintenance of a normal civilized life. They cannot be imposed, and their common rejection is not evidence of misunderstanding but of misconception. The declared intention of breaking with convention, the *tabula rasa* approach, reveals a lack of autonomy, an incapacity to sound out the perennial meanings of myth and archetypes. And yet "home" survives in all of us as the innermost refuge. The notion of home still has a fundamental meaning for each of us because we all come from somewhere, and we all feel the need to belong. If that desire is not fulfilled it turns to pain. That is the literal meaning of nostalgia – the longing to return, the pain of being severed. Our ideal of a beautiful city, of a beautiful house, of beautiful architecture is not utopian; nor is it a fantasy or an impossibility. We have all experienced the reality of it and it works strongly inside us. We have found there an unimaginable feeling of freedom, a possibility of happiness, a dream of well-being. From this perspective, building and taking care of our homeland are the very highest goals of human aspiration, of intelligence, of work, and hence of the art of building cities. What is essential in this art is not so much the beauty of ideas but the beauty of the result, of what the naked eye can see from the detail to the whole, without preparation or explanation of any kind. Before the panorama of a beautiful city we are often struck by the splendid coherence of the whole, of form, purpose, materials, symbols, and colors. On the other hand, nothing can be more tiresome than ugliness; there is no defense against its powerfully corrosive effects. A beautiful building by itself is unable to improve a sordid settlement, but a single ugly building can kill the soul of a proud city. The beauty of an ensemble, of a city or landscape represents an extremely vulnerable and fragile state of balance. A well-designed building may be an appreciable asset, but a beautiful village or city represents a foundational act, an act of civilization. By creating cities we create ourselves. When we spoil our cities we despoil ourselves. Our most cherished memories will henceforth generate the poison of regret, of irretrievable loss, even of hatred of what we prized the most. We then flee from the world and from ourselves. A beautiful village, a beautiful house, a beautiful city can become a home for all, a universal home. But if we lose this aim we build our own exile here on Earth.

THE TOWER ~ DRIVE

controled ~ uncontroled

TOWER-LESS SPRAWL "towerless"

FUTURELESS HORIZONTALITY

TRUE SKYSCRAPER CITY "tower-ful"

HORIZONTAL CITY WITH VERTICAL ACCENTS

LK 06

SPRAWLING TOWERS "tower-sick"

FUTURELESS VERTICALITY

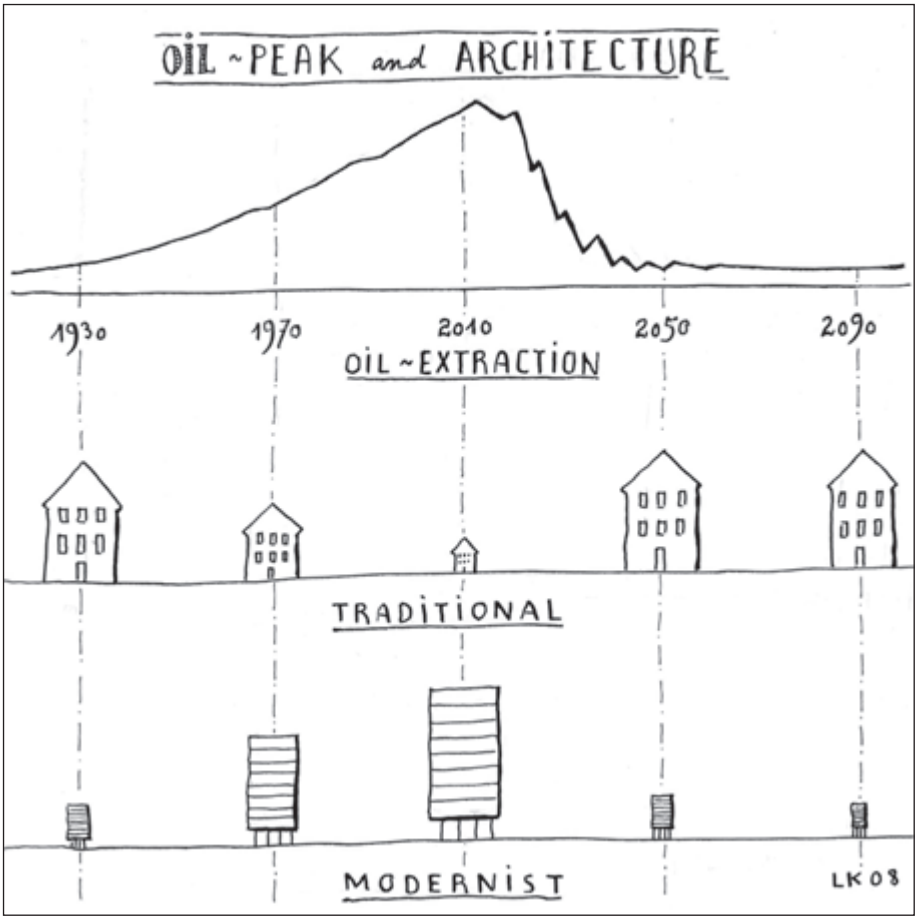
THE LAST WORD

by

JAMES HOWARD KUNSTLER

Critiquing the twin fiascos of architectural modernism and suburbia was problematical as long as the cheap oil regime remained in force to fuel all their enormities. History ceased to matter. Techno-triumphalism was the order of the day. Doubletalk and groupthink ruled the seminar chambers. The grandees and mandarins in the fine arts promoted each other to the rank of metaphysical viziers in an intellectual despotism aimed at crushing the human spirit. The sociopathic norms of the corporate boardroom – all profits to the shareholders (and gargantuan bonuses to the management!) – eclipsed any other value system. The lumpen public, reduced to so many mere consumer units, were hung out to dry on booby-trapped home equity lines-of-credit. The diminishing returns of all this nonsense and wickedness were ignored as entropy worked its remorseless hoodoo on our culture. The result, in America especially, was a land full of places and things not worth caring about and a living arrangement with no future.

I write in a stunning October week when the world financial markets are blowing up. They are self-destructing in large part because of the looming end of the cheap oil fiesta. The connection between the two has remained strangely recondite, even among people who should know better. It is as follows: the all-time peak of oil production implies the end of industrial growth as we have known it – especially when you correct for the unworkable fantasies that purport a continuing fiesta of so-called alternative or renewable energy sources. The end of industrial growth as we've known it implies that the investment instruments which represent the hope and expectation for future growth – stocks, bonds, currencies, et cetera – must lose their legitimacy. An attempt was made in recent years to work around this problem with engineered innovative financial instruments based on something other than industrial growth (namely, on getting something for nothing). These were the various species of mutant tradable papers denoted by their alphabet soup names: MBSs, CDOs, SIVs, CDSs. etc, most of them in one way or another originating from fraud in the real estate mortgage market, which is to say in the financing of suburban houses and their commercial accessories. These aggregate frauds amounted to a grand and comprehensive swindle, and now that swindle has left the world financial system in smoldering ruins.



There are persistent hopes in the so-called development community of production house-builders, property entrepreneurs, realtors, loan officers, and municipal officials that "a bottom" will be reached in the housing bubble debacle, which will lead to a new upswing in "the cycle." I'm here to tell you that their hopes are in vain. The project of suburbia is dead. The associated projects of Modernist megastructures, as well as their context of the so-called metroplex mega-city, will die along with suburbia. The events of autumn 2008 can be summarized as vast sums of capital leaving the system, never to return as far ahead as we can imagine. We have become overnight a poorer human race – in particular, those sectors of humanity who imagined themselves to be pretty well off . . . post-industrial . . . cutting edge . . . above the mundane . . . immune to the tedious vicissitudes of history. Not only is the suburban project dead, but the "normal" way of life we have known, as

represented by the infrastructure of our Happy Motoring utopia, has entered a terminal state of failure. Everything from the McHouse estates built of chipboard and vinyl, to the Big Box shopping empires, to the numberless strip malls, to the now-unmaintainable roadways themselves are all toast. It will all hemorrhage value and utility in the years ahead, and its destiny is probably some combination of slums, salvage yards, and ruins. Most of this stuff will not be retrofitted, though pieces of it will certainly be recycled, since the end of cheap oil also portends the demise of many synthetic and fabricated building materials.

All of this is to say that we have, suddenly, a new agenda for comprehensively rebuilding the human habitat in those parts of the world that have suffered most from the ravages of suburbia and architectural modernism. The end of the oil regime and the vanishing of capital means we will have to live differently, whether we like it or not, whether it is fashionable or not. And I am 99.999 percent certain that this means, in effect, a return to traditional ways of inhabiting the landscape: real towns, villages, neighborhoods, urban quarters, and cities of a different sort and scale than the hypertrophied monsters of recent decades. Also, real buildings of comprehendible typology made largely out of materials found in nature. This is what the circumstances of the years to come will require us to do.

We're fortunate that Leon Krier has been here all along, diligently documenting these fiascos while also preparing what amounts to a strategy for recovering a human ecology with a future. By this, I don't mean a futuristic science-fiction fantasy of sleek surfaces and robotic leisure – I mean a living arrangement with some prospect of enduring more than a few decades, a place that human beings can truly call home. What's more, Krier's vision of this ecology comes loaded with the exact quality that the twin fiascos of suburbia and modernism lacked: authentic humanism, offering spiritual reward for what is best in our nature, namely our ability to apprehend truth and beauty.

The debate over these things – traditional architecture and urbanism versus modernism and suburbia – is now concluded. The future can now reconnect with the past to create that dwelling place I call a hopeful present. This book is Mr. Krier's gift to the coming generations – who, otherwise, have been left saddled by us with little more than extravagant debts in every way you could imagine. They are going to have to inhabit what remains of this planet, along with whatever remains of its resources, when we are gone, and Mr. Krier's heroic, often lonely labors, have produced this indispensable beacon of principle and methodology to light their way home.

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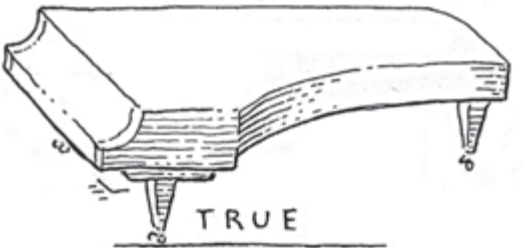
ACTUAL + SYMBOLIC

VALUES

natural - artificial

TRUE
SYMBOLIC
VALUE
SOCIAL CONVENTION

TRUE
NATURAL
VALUE
CHEMICAL FACT



TRUE
ARTIFICIAL
VALUE
PHYSICAL FACT

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242 LK in Williamsburg, Virginia, photograph by Dhiru Thadani
456 LK in Chandigarh, India, photograph and collage by Dhiru Thadani
457 Portrait photograph by Fréderic Valenti

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Léon Krier was born in Luxembourg in 1946. He studied architecture at the University of Stuttgart for two terms. Between 1968 and 1974 he collaborated with James Stirling in London.

He has taught architecture and urbanism in London at the Architectural Association 1974 to 1976 and at the Royal College of Arts 1977. In the United States he has taught at Princeton University 1974 to 1977; as Jefferson Professor at the University of Virginia 1982; as Davenport Professor at Yale University 1990, 2002, 2004, 2005, and 2007; and with Andrés Duany he was the Saarinen Professor at Yale University 2001.

His awards include the Berlin Prize for Architecture 1987; the Jefferson Memorial Medal 1985; the Chicago AIA Award 1987; the Silver Medal of Academie Française 1998; European Culture Prize 1995; the Driehaus Prize 2003; and the Congress for the New Urbanism Athena Award 2006.

Exhibitions of his work have been held throughout the world, including a personal show at the Museum of Modern art in New York in 1985.

Léon Krier has worked extensively in Europe and North America. He is currently working on projects in Guatemala, Romania, USA, England, Belgium, Italy, and France, and is personal adviser to the Prince of Wales for whom he designed the masterplan for the development of Poundbury in Dorset County, England, 1985 to present and Chapeltown development in Newquay Cornwall, 1991 and 2003–2007.

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EDITORS' BIOGRAPHIES

Dhiru A. Thadani, AIA, CNU, was born in Bombay, India and moved to Washington, DC in 1972 to study architecture. He has taught and practiced architecture and urbanism in Asia, Europe, North and Central America. He is a charter member of the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU), and was appointed to the CNU Board of Directors in 2005.

He has lectured internationally, and has held faculty positions at the Catholic University of America, the University of Maryland, and the University of Miami. He is a 2001 Fellow of the Knight Program in Community Building. Mr. Thadani edited *Town Planning: Principles and Techniques*, published by the University of Maryland in 1994, and was co-editor of the *Windsor Forum on Design Education: Toward an Ideal Curriculum to Reform Architectural Education*, published by New Urban Press 2004.

Mr. Thadani has been the lead designer for developments ranging in scale from new towns for 500,000 inhabitants to smaller resort communities, residential infill to revitalize neighborhoods, and academic campuses. He continues to reside in Washington, DC with his wife, Terry Schum, AICP, and two children, Adrienne and Dylan.

Peter Hetzel is a native New Yorker. He received Architecture and Urban Design degrees from Pratt Institute and Washington University. He has held faculty positions at the Catholic University of America and the University of Maryland, and is a charter member of the Congress for the New Urbanism.

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